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REPORT  
OF  
A MISSION  
TO THE  
NORTHERN FRONTIER OF KASHMIR  
IN  
1889

BY  
CAPTAIN F. E. YOUNGHUSBAND,  
KING'S DRAGOON GUARDS,  
(On Special Duty under the Foreign Department.)

WITH A MAP AND ILLUSTRATIONS.



CALCUTTA  
PRINTED BY THE SUPERINTENDENT OF GOVERNMENT PRINTING, INDIA.  
1890.

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THE  
NORTHERN FRONTIER  
OF  
KASHMIR

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पुस्तक की प्रतिलिपि

## INTRODUCTION.

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**I**N June 1889 the Government of India decided upon sending a small party to examine the Northern Frontier of the Kashmir State. Captain F. E. Younghusband, King's Dragoon Guards, was selected for the command of the party, and the general instructions given him may be briefly stated as follows:—

- I. To go to Sháhídúla *via* Leh, and enquire into the case of the Kirghiz, who had come to us for protection from the Kanjúti raids.
- II. To enquire into the means of defending the Leh-Yárkand road from further depredations from Hunza.
- III. To obtain guides from the Kirghiz and with their aid explore the main range of the Mústágh Mountains, from the Kárákorum Pass to the Kilik Pass at the bend of the Hindu Kush, from which point westward the main range had been explored previously by Colonel Lockhart's Mission.
- IV. To make a rough survey of the regions explored.
- V. To return to India *via* Hunza and Gilgit, so as to meet with Captain A. G. A. Durand's Mission, who likewise were under orders to visit Hunza from Gilgit; and thus by entering his country from both directions to produce a good political effect upon the Rájá of Hunza.
- VI. Finally, to write a report upon the strategical value of this northern frontier with a view to any possible invasion of Kashmir from the direction of the Pámirs or Yárkand.

To enable him to fulfil these objects, a guard of five sepoy of the 5th Gurkhas under Havildar Sibdal Gurang, and a Rurki Surveyor, Sowar Shahzad Mir, XIth (P. W. O.) Bengal Lancers, were detailed to accompany Captain Young-husband; and he was also provided, in advance, with ₹4,000 for political expenditure and ₹5,000 for the miscellaneous expenses of himself and escort.

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BEFORE proceeding to narrate the progress and results of

Summary of our previous knowledge of the region on the Northern Frontier of Kashmir.

the mission with which I was entrusted, it may be well to describe briefly the state of our previous knowledge of the regions on the northern frontier of Kashmir, and the importance that existed of making ourselves more fully acquainted with the state of affairs there, in order to be able to counteract any hostile movement directed towards Kashmir. To the north of Kashmir there is a vast mountainous region culminating in the great range of the Mústágh Mountains, which run in a north-westerly direction from the Kárákorum

Pass, till they meet the Hindu Kush, at the angle, in Long.  $75^{\circ}$ , Lat.  $35^{\circ}$ , near the Kilik Pass. It had always been surmised that this great main range, which divides the waters which flow to India from those which take their way towards Central Asia, must form a very effectual barrier against any invasion from the north; but from the Kilik Pass, which had been explored by Colonel Lockhart's party in 1886, to the Kárákoram Pass, it had only been crossed by Europeans at two points, *viz.*, at the Mintaka Pass by the Russian traveller Captain Grombtchevsky, in September 1888, and at the Mústágh Pass by the writer in 1887.

2. The Russians, however, have lately been paying considerable attention to this region. In 1887  
 Russian designs. Grum-Grijmailo explored the region of the

Pámirs up to Hunza, and afterwards the upper valley of the Yárkand River, and in 1888 Captain Grombtchevsky entered Hunza, and then attempted to explore the country at the back of the Kashmir frontier, right up to Sháhídúla. In 1878 a Russian column of 2,500 men with six guns actually left Margilan for our northern frontier, and it is reported that in 1885, when our relations with Russia were strained, the Consul at Káshgar made arrangements for collecting supplies and transport for a force whose destination was said to be Leh. Seeing, therefore, the designs of the Russians upon this quarter it behoved us to be at least not behind them in gaining accurate information of our northern frontier.

3. Hitherto, however, the chief difficulty to be contended with, in the exploration of these parts, has been that of obtaining good guides. The  
 The Kirghiz apply to us for aid against Kanjúti raids. only people who know all the routes are the Kirghiz, and they had, up till now, been unwilling to give us assistance. But last year they had been raided upon by the Kanjútis from Hunza, and not having been able to induce the Chinese authorities at Yárkand to take up their case and afford them protection, they came to us, and applied to Captain Ramsay, the British Joint Commissioner at Leh, for assistance. As they expressed themselves willing

to give us guides if we helped them, an opportunity was thus afforded of exploring the unknown no-man's-land which lies on the northern frontier of Kashmir, between the Mústágh Mountains and Chinese Turkestan, and of gaining a knowledge of the Kirghiz inhabitants and their degree of dependence on the Chinese, and of the position of the southern boundary of Chinese territory.

4. The Government of India having decided to take this opportunity, I was summoned to Simla at the end of June 1889, and having received my instructions from the Foreign Secretary and made all necessary arrangements, I

Government of India take the opportunity to send a small party of exploration.

left Simla on July 5th, spent a few days at Rawal Pindi collecting camp equipage stores, etc., and after calling at Abbottabad to inspect the escort of the 5th Gurkhas detailed to accompany me, proceeded to Gulmarg to receive instructions about my movements from Colonel Parry Nisbet, the Resident in Kashmir. On July 19th I rejoined the escort at Ganderbal, and Shahzad Mir, the Rurki Surveyor, having also caught up the party, we proceeded at once to Leh, which was reached on July 31st, twenty days, only, from the date of the escort leaving Abbottabad.

5. Here I found the two Kirghiz, Sattiwáli and Musa who had come down from Sháhidúla to ask us for aid. On my explaining to them that Government had sent me to enquire into their case, and to see what could be done towards protecting the Yárkand road from further raids, they expressed themselves willing to help me by supplying me with guides, to explore all the routes leading into Hunza, and it now only remained to me to make the final preparations for supplies, transport, etc., required on the journey.

Meeting with the Kirghiz deputation at Leh.

6. Knowing from my experience in 1887 that supplies are quite unobtainable in the region on the northern slopes of the Mústágh Mountains which I was about to explore, it became necessary either to take grain, flour, etc., for at least three months, from Leh, or to trust to the Kirghiz being able to make arrange-

Arrangements for supplies.

ments for bringing down instalments from Yárkand territory to Sháhídúla. The former plan seemed the safer, but would have required a large amount of transport, and caused delay, and I therefore preferred to make arrangements with Musa, the Kirghiz, and, giving him R400, sent him on by double marches to Sháhídúla, and told him to collect two months' supplies at that place from Kilian, the nearest town in Yárkand territory.

7. The question of transport now had to be considered.

Transport. As far as Sháhídúla, and for some distance further down the Yárkand River, I knew that the route was perfectly practicable for laden ponies, but it was very questionable whether ponies carrying loads could accompany me in the exploration of the lofty passes on the main range. For that sort of work coolies would evidently be the best form of transport, but here the difficulty arose that in a country where no supplies could be obtained for perhaps two months, a coolie would be unable to carry more than the amount necessary for himself to eat. The same difficulty applied almost equally to ponies, and it was therefore a relief to me to hear from Musa, the Kirghiz, that camels, which could feed on the scanty scrub found in the mountains, and which would not, therefore, require any grain for themselves to be taken, could be obtained from the Kirghiz; and that the route down the Yárkand River by the Tágh-dúm-básh Pámir to Hunza was practicable for these animals. It was, therefore, possible to arrange for camels to deposit instalments of supplies at certain bases along the Yárkand River, while fifteen ponies were taken to transport the party from these bases to the foot of the passes, and three coolies for the exploration of the summits, and places where ponies could not be taken. I have entered at some length into this question of supplies and transport, not only because it may be of use to other expeditions sent to those parts, but also because it may be useful for military purposes to know the difficulties of this description which a force operating in those parts would have to encounter.

8. At Leh it was also necessary for me to provide myself with an escort from the Kashmiri garrison of that place to take on to Sháhídúla—more with the object of making a show, and impressing the Kirghiz, than for any real necessity. The Foreign Secretary had suggested that about 25 sepoy should be taken, but I found the whole garrison, both regulars and irregulars, to number only 79 men, and of these only 17 could be spared to accompany my party. All these men were in a wretched condition, being poorly paid, fed, and armed, and generally discontented. Leh is now practically a frontier post of our Empire, and situated on our only trade route with Central Asia, while the Russian traveller Captain Grombtchevsky this very year made an attempt to get there, so that it would appear advisable to take measures to remedy its at present defenceless condition.

9. At Leh I received very valuable assistance and advice from Captain Ramsay, and with his aid all the preparations for the difficult piece of exploration before us were finally completed, and the party left Leh on August 8th, the Kashmiri escort having started a few days previously. Our first objective point was Sháhídúla, the head-quarters of the Kirghiz who had come to us for aid. This place is situated on the great trade route to Yárkand, and is 240 miles distant from Leh by the road over the Sasír Pass, which is the one used in the summer and autumn. The route is well known, having been traversed by the Yárkand Mission and several explorers. It is only necessary, therefore, to mention here that four passes,<sup>1</sup> averaging 17,600 feet above sea-level, have to be crossed, and that for 170 miles, or as far as from Peshawur to Kabul, no supplies are to be obtained, and even grass and fuel are extremely scarce, the route passing through a very elevated region of bare rocks and gravel. The road is, however, practicable for ponies, and, in the autumn months especially, is much frequented by traders between Yárkand and Leh, though the

<sup>1</sup> The Khardung, 17,500'; the Sasír, 17,800'; the Kárákoram, 18,550'; and the Sugel, 17,600'.

rarefaction of the air causes great distress to both ponies and men, and the route is strewn with the skeletons of animals who have succumbed to the hardships of the road.

10. The Khardung Pass (17,500 feet) had to be crossed the day after leaving Leh. It is very steep, and on the north side a nasty ice-slope makes it necessary to replace ponies by the more sure-footed yaks, which are so useful in these mountains, on high and difficult passes. Next day we crossed the Shayok, at this season a large and rapid river, by a ferry, and then followed the road up the lovely Nubra Valley to Chang-lung, the last village we should see for some months to come, and where it was necessary to make our final preparations, and think of every detail down even to alpenstocks for the men, as we could expect to get nothing afterwards from the nomadic Kirghiz, who would be the only people we should meet till our explorations were over. Supplies of every kind had also to be taken from here, as not even firewood could be obtained between this and Sháhídúla, 170 miles distant.

11. In the Nubra Valley we began to meet parties of traders just come over the mountains from Yárkand, and from them we gleaned scraps of information, the most important of which was that a party of Russians had arrived at Yárkand, and then left for Kugiar, from whence they were said to be going to either Kanjút or Sháhídúla, *en route* to Tibet. If Sháhídúla was their destination, it was very important that I should arrive there first, and I therefore determined to push rapidly on, with my orderly and interpreter, leaving the escort to follow afterwards with the baggage.

12. On August 16th I crossed the Sasír Pass (17,800 feet). This pass is a good deal feared by the traders, who say that, next to the Kilian Pass, it is the worst on the road, on account of a glacier which has to be crossed on the summit. But the ice of this glacier is not difficult at the season of the year when my party crossed, and I found no necessity for dismounting from my pony the whole way over, which was a great comfort,

as walking at high elevations is extremely trying, and should only be done when there is a real need for it. On the present occasion there was no such necessity, and so, to preserve my party as fresh as possible for the time when the real pinch would come, in the trying explorations before us, I was careful to arrange that the whole of my party should be mounted during the passage of the high mountains on the way to Sháhídúla. At the northern foot of the Sasír Pass I found Sattiwali, with some camels, which I had ordered down, for carrying the supplies. Camels can come as far as this, but are not able to cross the Sasír Pass on account of the ice. On the following day we crossed the Shayok River for the second time. In winter a route leads down the river on the ice, but in summer it has to be crossed at two different places, and, apart from the difficulties of the mountains, this river alone would form no small obstacle to an invading army, when we consider not only that no boats would be available, but also that there is not even the sign of a tree for nearly 200 miles with which to make them.

13. We were now in a wilderness of barren rocky mountains, through which the road insinuates its way, now passing through gorges, where a handful of resolute men could stop ten times their own number; now zig-zagging up the steep mountain-side to surmount a precipitous cliff; then, perhaps only a few hundred yards further on, descending again to the very bed of the stream, only to be met by yet another cliff which has to be surmounted, and then finally emerging on to the lofty Depsang plain, a billowy expanse of gravel mounds, situated at an elevation of over 17,000 feet above the sea. During the passage of these mountains we were constantly caught in terrific squalls of wind and snow, but we pressed on by double, and sometimes treble, marches for fear of being forestalled at Sháhídúla. On August 18th we reached the foot of the Kárákoram Pass, and during the night it snowed heavily, and the cold was sufficiently severe to freeze over small streams; and this, when in the plains of India, which we

had left but little more than a month ago, it must have been so overpoweringly hot!

14. It was a dreary march up to the Kárákoram Pass through a valley which all previous travellers have unanimously named the Valley of the Shadow of Death—a pebbly waste, bounded by bare gravel hills, silent as the grave, without a single sign of life, but with every mark of death, for the valley is strewn with the bones of the poor baggage ponies employed by the enterprising traders, who risk the perils and difficulties of these mountains to carry their goods into the heart of Central Asia. But the far-famed Kárákoram Pass, although it is 18,550 feet high, and crosses the watershed of Asia, is not, except for the exhaustion caused by the rarefaction of the air, a difficult one. Both ascent and descent are gentle and easy, no eternal snow lies either on the pass or on the mountain peaks on each side of it, and but for the headache and feeling of depression which, on account of the high elevation, every one feels, it would be hard to realise that one was crossing so lofty and important a pass. In the far distance, indeed, across the dismal Depsang plain, could be seen the magnificent range of snowy mountains through which we had just passed, culminating in the superb peak Depsang, 26,000 feet high; but near the Kárákoram Pass itself, there are only dreary-looking gravel mountains, and nothing to indicate that they are part of the loftiest range of mountains in the world.

15. At the northern foot of the pass we saw the tombstone which had just been erected to the memory of poor Dalglish, a man of whom every Englishman ought to be proud, for he has done much towards keeping up our good name in Turkestán, and all who knew him in Central Asia speak in feeling terms of his kind, genial manner, and ever readiness to help.

16. From the Kárákoram Pass the road leads through a dreary waste of barren gravel hills. At Aktágh a route leading from Hunza joins in, and in consequence we found that all the caravans we met

were fully armed, and marched together as a protection against possible Kanjúti raids. On August 20th we crossed the Suget Pass, which, though 17,600 feet high, is not difficult, and on the following day reached the camping ground called Suget, where for the first time for over 160 miles we saw bushes and jungle. This spot is 9 miles above Sháhídúla, and is situated on the Kárákásh River. A Bajauri merchant, named Ján Mohammed Khán, and a few Kirghiz are settled here, and they came out some distance to meet me, and Ján Mohammed Khán led me into a comfortable yurta and regaled me with tea, fresh milk, and some excellent chupatties of Kirghiz make. It was a relief to hear from him that no Russians had yet arrived near Sháhídúla, and that there was, therefore, no cause to fear our being forestalled. Sháhídúla itself was, however, reported to be deserted, and Turdi Kol, the head-man, had removed his tent some distance lower down the valley to avoid the risk of again being attacked, as he had been last year on this very spot.

17. It was useless, therefore, to go to Sháhídúla till the Kirghiz were collected, and I halted a day near Ján Mohammed Khán's camp. He is a well-known man in these parts, has served various English travellers for many years past, and was also of great assistance to me in my subsequent explorations and arrangements; so it may be interesting to describe him. He is a native of Bajaur, and has traded for several years between Peshawur, Badakshán, Yárkand, and Kashmir, and has finally settled down at Suget, where he has formed a store for supplying the caravans on the route with grain, flour, shoe-nails, and other necessities for the passage of the mountains. He speaks Persian, Turki, Pushtu, and Hindustani, and was used by Mr. Ney Elias as interpreter during his visit to Yárkand. Since settling at Suget he seems to have thrown in his lot with the Kirghiz, and when the Kanjúti raid took place last year, he accompanied Turdi Kol to petition the Chinese Ambán for protection; and when this was refused, it was he who first suggested the advisability of applying to us for assistance.

18. Regarding the Kanjúti raid, I was told by Jan Mohammed Khán that the marauders came over the Sokhbulák Pass down upon Suget, and having surprised some Kirghiz, bound them hand and foot, and, on pain of immediate death, made them show where Turdi Kol was living. The Kanjútis then made them call Turdi Kol out of his tent, while they waited outside ready to catch him directly he appeared. But Turdi Kol, suspecting something was wrong, took up his rifle (an English one), and, having caught sight of a Kanjúti, fired at him and wounded him. The remainder then fled with the men they had already secured. The Kanjútis seem to have been poorly armed with only a few matchlocks, and when Ján Mohammed, who was away from Suget Jangal at the time, heard of it, he set off with Turdi Kol in pursuit, and went as far as the Bazardarra river, six marches distant, but without overtaking them.

19. Hearing that the Kirghiz were collecting at Sháhídúla, I marched to that place on August 23rd, and on the way met Turdi Kol, a thin, careworn-looking man, rather over middle age, very grave and sedate in manner, but with a certain dignity about him. The nomadic instincts of his race gave him a free independent character, but he felt now that much rested upon the answer I should give to his petition for help, for though, as I afterwards discovered, Turdi Kol himself is far above the ordinary Kirghiz, both in pluck and intelligence, he knew that it would be too great a risk to remain at Sháhídúla with men who would run away at the first approach of a Kanjúti, and therefore if we did not now help him he would have to migrate at considerable cost to some place which, to his mind, did not possess so many advantages as Sháhídúla, situated as it is on the trade route where he can always make money by hiring out his camels. As already mentioned, Turdi Kol is much above the average Kirghiz in point of intelligence, and this is probably due to the fact of his having travelled considerably to Hunza, Wakhán, and Yárkand, and mixed constantly with the traders, by whom he is much respected, and who all called him a very "straight" man. He is a good sportsman,

and afterwards, when he accompanied me to the Tágh-dúm-básh Pámir and felt really sure of his security, the careworn appearance left him, and he became a very pleasant companion, with a fund of interesting anecdotes, handed down to him by his father, about the different places we passed by the way.

20. For my part I, also, was anxious how the arrangements with the Kirghiz should turn out, for upon them depended the success of the second part of the programme set down for me, *viz.*, the exploration of the passes over the Mustagh Mountains. Without the assistance of Kirghiz guides it would be impossible to carry that out successfully. But hitherto the Kirghiz had always refused to provide guides, and Musa at Leh had said that, unless we brought a sufficient force, the Kirghiz would be unwilling to give us guides. My six Gurkhas, though they were such stout little fellows and fully a match for ten times their number of Kanjútis, were hardly sufficient to produce an impression of confidence into the Kirghiz mind. I had therefore brought on the Kashmiri escort of 17 men, with their full-dress uniforms, to add to the effect, while it was my intention also to make the most of Captain Durand's mission to Hunza, and point out to the Kirghiz that he was settling matters direct with the Rájá.

21. On reaching Sháhídúla I invited Turdi Kol to an interview, at which I commenced the business by telling him that Musa's request, on behalf of the Sarakiya<sup>1</sup> Kirghiz, for aid from the British, had been forwarded by the Joint Commissioner at Leh to His Excellency the Viceroy, but that, as Musa had nothing with him to prove who he was, or that he had been deputed by the Kirghiz, the Viceroy was unable to listen to his petition, and had, therefore, sent me to enquire into the circumstances of the Kanjúti raids last year, and to ask the head-men of the Kirghiz what their requirements were. I accordingly begged Turdi Kol

<sup>1</sup> Sarakiya is the name given by the Kirghiz to the valley of the Kárákash River, in which Sháhídúla is situated. The Kirghiz of Sháhídúla are generally known as the Sarakiya Kirghiz.

to now tell me exactly what had happened, and to let me know what he and the Kirghiz wanted.

22. Turdi Kol then related how, at the beginning of September last year, a party of 87 Kanjútis, armed, some with matchlocks, some with swords, and some with picks only, had come over the Shimshál Pass, up the valley of the Yárkand River, into the Kárákásh Valley at Sháhídúla, from which they carried off 21 men and women, besides a considerable amount of property. These men were all taken to Kanjút, where they were afterwards, with the exception of one man, released at the price of R80 a head. After the raid, Sattiwali, the second head-man, went to the Chinese Ambán at Yárkand, who referred him to the Kárgilik Ambán, saying that the Kirghiz were in the jurisdiction of the latter. This official told Sattiwali that Sháhídúla was beyond the Káráwal (frontier post) and in British territory, and that therefore he could give the Kirghiz no assistance. Sattiwali asked to have this put down in writing and sealed, but the Ambán refused, and said he would refer the matter to the Governor-General at Urumtsi, and that an answer might be expected in six months. Sattiwali then went to the Yárkand Ambán, with Turdi Kol and Ján Mohammed Khán, who had also arrived. Turdi Kol tells me that the Yárkand Ambán also said that Sháhídúla was beyond the Chinese frontier and in British territory, and that therefore he would give the Kirghiz no assistance. But Ján Mohammed Khán (who was interpreting for me) told me that what the Ambán really said was, that Sháhídúla was very far away and beyond the Káráwal, and that therefore the Kirghiz had better go within the Sanju and Kilian Passes. At any rate the Ambán had refused to give the Kirghiz any protection whatever as long as they lived in these parts. Turdi Kol, in reply, told the Yárkand Ambán that the Kirghiz had always paid the Chinese taxes, and that therefore they had some right to ask for protection. The Ambán then told Turdi Kol to write out a petition in Turki and Chinese, which he would give to the Taotai at

His account of the Kanjúti raid, and application to the Chinese for protection.

Kashgar. But no answer having arrived from Urumtsi or Kashgar, the Kirghiz decided upon applying to the British for protection, and accordingly deputed Musa to go to Leh.

23. Turdi Kol, after thus describing his negotiations with the Chinese, said his father and grand-father were chiefs of the Kirghiz, who in those times inhabited all the country of Raskam (which extends along the valley of the Yárkand River westward to the Tágh-dúm-básh Pámir), that then all the country was well populated, crops were grown, and a fort had been erected at one place, but Kanjúti raids drove the Kirghiz into the Kárákásh Valley, where they were safe during the rule of Yákúb Beg, as he stationed troops at Sháhidúla, and took care of the route; but the Chinese now would afford them no protection, and the Kirghiz therefore now offered their allegiance to the British Government.

24. In reply, I said that I had no power to accept their allegiance, as I had been merely sent to enquire into their wants, but I should have much pleasure in informing His Excellency the Viceroy of their request, and I could at any rate tell them this much, that three English officers were then in Kanjút with a small force, and that there would always be English officers with several regiments and a mountain battery at Gilgit, ready, if necessary, to go into Kanjút. But I was going to leave 17 Kashmiri sepoy at Sháhidúla for a short time for the protection of the trade route, while I myself was going with the remainder of my party to Kanjút to meet the other officers, so that, for this year at any rate, and probably for some time to come, they might consider themselves safe against Kanjúti raids. On hearing this Turdi Kol bowed profoundly, and said that this was all that the Kirghiz required, that those that had this year deserted the Kárákásh Valley would now return, and would be able to live in peace and cultivate the land in both the Yárkand and Kárákásh Valleys, so that, as grain would be grown, they would be, like in former times, independent of the Chinese for supplies.

25. I then said that, though the English were doing a great deal towards suppressing Kanjúti raids, yet the Kirghiz must be prepared to defend themselves to some extent, and I asked him what he would propose doing. He said he wanted money with which to repair the Sháhídúla fort, and also asked that some one might be sent there to represent British authority, and so support him as Chief of the Kirghiz, for he said that, although they all recognised him as their Chief, yet they were a very independent people, and he could not order them to do what he liked, as he ought now to be able to do; and he thought that, if there were a representative of British authority there, it would keep them all together and add greatly to their strength.

26. As the Kirghiz are a nomad people, and not accustomed to living in forts, I thought it necessary to make sure that they would keep the fort in repair before I acceded to their request for money. Turdi Kol, however, said that he would be very glad to live in it himself, that the Kirghiz would undertake to build it themselves, obtaining the wood from lower down the Kárákásh valley, and the doors from Sanjú. I then told him that, if he really wanted the fort repaired, and if the Kirghiz were ready to do it themselves, I would give him R800 for that purpose. And, with regard to his other request, I said that I would inform Government of his wish, and in the meanwhile, at a meeting of all the head-men, which I proposed to invite together on the next day, I would request them, as they had chosen Turdi Kol to be their Chief, to now obey his orders whatever he told them to do. Before closing the interview I again repeated to Turdi Kol that I could myself in no way accept the allegiance of the Kirghiz, but would inform His Excellency the Viceroy of their wish. I then presented Turdi Kol with a choga and turban, and told him I wished him to accompany me to Kanjúti to show me the way, to which he replied that he and all the Kirghiz were at my service, and he would be most happy to come with me.

27. On the following day I invited a meeting of the <sup>Meeting of all the Kirghiz.</sup> head-men (seven in number, who formed a sort of council) and all the Kirghiz then at Sháhídúla. After repeating to them what I had previously told Turdi Kol and what he had told me, I asked if they had anything further to say; they bowed and replied that they had nothing more to say. I then gave them each some presents, and afterwards asked if they would agree to obey Turdi Kol. They all bowed towards him and said that they would, and I therefore handed R800 to him, and told him it should be spent in defensive measures for the protection of the Kirghiz, and the trade route against the raids of Kanjútis. Thus ended the meeting, and they all went away very highly satisfied. At this meeting I had appeared in full-dress uniform, and had my two guards (also in full dress) drawn up on each side, and both at the commencement and termination of the proceedings a salute of three volleys was fired.

28. A few days afterwards I had a small sham fight to <sup>Sham fight before the Kirghiz.</sup> impress the Kirghiz with the power of our rifles. A large strip of red cloth was fastened on to one face of the fort, and from a distance of about 700 yards the Gurkhas made an attack upon this by a series of rushes, firing volleys between each rush, and ending up with a bayonet charge, in which the Kashmiri escort joined in as a reserve. The Kirghiz were greatly delighted when they saw the piece of cloth hit in several places at the first volley, and at the end of the proceedings, when they saw the whole thing torn to shreds, they said that the Gurkhas would be able to hold their own against any band of Kaniútis they were likely to meet on the road.

29. Caravans of traders from Yárkand passed through <sup>Yárkand traders. Russian influence in Chinese Turkestan.</sup> Sháhídúla daily, and from them I heard that the Russians were stationary near Kugiar. Exaggerated rumours regarding the strength of my party had reached Yárkand, but the fact of there being a "Sahib" at all on the road was quite sufficient to make the traders, who had hitherto hesitated to start

for Leh, consider that the road must now be perfectly safe from robbers. All these traders complain very much of the manner in which our subjects and our interests are neglected in Turkestan, in comparison with the fostering care accorded to Russian subjects by the Consul at Kashgar. One of their causes of complaint is that British subjects are not allowed to take Indian tea into Chinese territory, as the Chinese import their own tea and refuse to let any other into the country, though Russian subjects are allowed to take Indian tea through Yárkand to Russian territory.

30. The neighbourhood of Sháhídúla is barren and un-  
 Sháhídúla and neigh- interesting. The place itself merely con-  
 bourhood. sists of the fort, situated in a plain on the left bank of the Kárákásh River, and a patch of jungle and grass in the neighbourhood, which forms a suitable spot for Kirghiz encampments. The mountain-sides are bare slopes of detritus fallen from the more rocky summits above; and in these parts one never sees the sign of a tree or a bush or even grass on the mountains, for vegetation is only met with in the valley bottom, near the river-bank, and then only of a very scanty description. The climate of Sháhídúla is certainly disagreeable, for every day, almost without exception, according to the Kirghiz (and my own experience goes to corroborate the statement), a violent wind blows up the valley, and though in summer it is moderately warm, the cold in winter is very great, the thermometer descending considerably below zero Fahrenheit. Some five miles below Sháhídúla the mountains close in and the valley narrows to a width of a quarter of a mile, and, after again opening out for four marches, it closes in to an impassable gorge called Galimolák, from whence a difficult road, practicable only for men on foot and crossing a series of ridges, away from the Kárákásh Valley, leads to Khotan.

31. The Sarakiya Kirghiz (including those on the north side of the Sanjú Pass) number 40 tents or about 120 men, besides women and children. They live, according to their pleasure, on either side of the Sanjú Pass, sometimes on one side and some-

times on the other; but they all belong to one branch, with Turdi Kol as their Chief, and six other head-men, who form a sort of council. They are a well-dressed, well-to-do-looking lot of men, careless and good-natured, but very independent; they are quiet and orderly, but not in the least warlike. Till the arrival of myself and escort they were in the greatest dread of the Kanjútis, for their habit is to live scattered over the valley, and they have therefore little chance of defending themselves against a strong band of marauders. Perhaps about twenty or thirty of them possess matchlocks of a primitive pattern, and the remainder are unarmed. They possess flocks of sheep and goats, and also camels, yaks, and ponies, which they hire out to traders on the route from Leh to Yárkand, but they are entirely dependent for supplies upon Yárkand territory. They are a branch of the same Kirghiz who inhabit the Pámirs and Alai, and, as before mentioned, settled here some forty or fifty years ago, when driven away from Raskam (the upper valley of the Yárkand River). The Chinese Ambán suggested to them that, if they feared the Kanjútis, they should emigrate and join the other Kirghiz near Marál-báshi and Aksú, but Turdi Kol said that the country there was too hot, and they preferred settling at Sháhídúla, although, if it were possible, they would rather return to Raskam, which is warmer than Sháhídúla, and which can support crops. They pay taxes regularly to the Chinese, the yearly amount being about 200 tangas, or R44, and any important case is taken before the Ambáns of Kargilik or Yárkand. But the Kirghiz, like all nomadic people, are proverbially loose in their allegiance, and on the Pámirs it is not uncommon to find them pay taxes to two and sometimes three different kingdoms.

32. The fort at Sháhídúla was originally built, about the year 1863, by some soldiers sent by Bas-tiram Wazir of Leh. A few years afterwards these retired, on the approach of the Andijáni troops of Yákub Beg, and the fort was then held by the latter until the downfall of Yákub Beg. It is situated in a plain about half a mile broad in the valley of the Kárákásh River near the junction of the Khál-chuskun stream from the westward.

**Sháhídúla Fort.**

The fort is built of pebbles and boulders cemented together with mud; it is 20 yards in length and 15 yards broad, with circular towers at the angles. The walls were 7 feet high and 2 feet thick, but the Kirghiz are enlarging them, as they seem to think that they are safer within a wall twice the thickness.

Such is a description of the state of affairs at Sháhídúla at the time of my visit, and in the next chapter I will describe the exploration of the Mústágh Mountains, the accomplishment of which had been made possible by the success of the arrangements with the Kirghiz detailed above.

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## CHAPTER II.

## EXPLORATION OF PASSES INTO BÁLTISTÁN.

1. Preparations for the exploration—2. Infusing loyalty into the party—3. Composition of party and daily routine—4. Leave Sháhídúla—5. Descending the Yárkand River—6. Valley narrows to a gorge—7. Signs of former occupation—8. A route to Pákhpúlú—9. Signs of Russians—10. Great height of the mountains—11. The Khoja Mohammed gorge—12. Former Kanjúti raids—13. Ascent of the Aghil Range—14. Magnificent view of the Mústágh Mountains—15. Preparing to explore the Sálto Pass—16. Ascending the Oprang River—17. In an ice-bound region—18. Ascending a glacier—19. Difficulties of the route—20. Searching for a route—21. Reach the head of the glacier—22. Attempted ascent of the Sálto Pass—23. An avalanche—24. Compelled to turn back—25. Heavy snowstorms—26. Description of the glacier—27. Return to main camp—28. Results of exploration: no route into Báltistán.

1. To successfully accomplish such a task as the exploration of a stupendous range of mountains like the Mústágh, where we should have to find our way for many weeks through an often trackless, and entirely uninhabited, labyrinth of sterile mountains, and overcome all such difficulties as unbridged rivers, rugged glaciers, and lofty passes, where supplies, and frequently even fuel and grass, would be unobtainable, and where we must be ever ready for a possible attack by Kanjúti raiders,—to accomplish such a task required much thoughtful preparation and arrangement beforehand. Foremost among these arrangements came the question of supplies: for seventy days we should not be able to obtain any, and it was therefore necessary to take sufficient for that time from Sháhídúla. What I had sent for in advance from Leh arrived from Yárkand territory by the end of August, but it was impossible to get transport on the spot for the whole amount, and so we had to arrange for a system of depôts, and for sending the camels back for a second instalment. Finally, when we left Sháhídúla, we took with us—

3,200 lbs. of grain for the ponies,  
1,440 lbs. of flour for men,  
160 lbs. of rice do.,  
48 lbs. of ghee do.,

besides a miscellaneous supply of tea, sugar, etc., and a flock of 7 sheep and 6 goats. Next to supplies and transport

the most important thing was to get a good guide, and fortunately (besides Turdi Kol himself, who had agreed to accompany us) we were able to get the services of a man who had been taken captive over the Shimshál Pass on the previous year. Tools for road-making had also to be got together, shoes for the ponies collected, pack-saddles repaired, and every detail thoroughly overhauled.

“ For want of a nail the shoe was lost,  
For want of a shoe the horse was lost,  
For want of a horse the rider was lost,  
For want of a rider the battle was lost.”

2. But, besides all such arrangements, there was one point which, to ensure success, was most important of all. It was above everything necessary that each man in our little party should be made to feel thoroughly contented and satisfied with his lot, and be induced to take a practical interest in the final success of the expedition. The commander of an expedition naturally has his whole heart in the undertaking, and for his own credit, if for no higher motive, does his utmost. But with those under him the case is very different. What is it to them if there is a pass over a certain range or a road to a certain place, or if there is not? They take no interest in discovering new rivers and ranges, studying new peoples and tongues, and looking on new scenes and effects of Nature. Such things are nothing to them, and while they have to endure the greater privations and discomforts and do all the hard work which enables the leader to accomplish his desires, he lives in comparative luxury during the expedition, and gets all the credit for it at the end. It is therefore very essential that everything that is possible should be done to make the whole party feel that their interests are being well looked after, and that though their present hardships may be great, yet that they will eventually reap considerable benefits if the expedition is finally brought to a successful termination. With the Kirghiz I had to hold out hopes of money rewards, and promises of protection against Kanjúti raids; with my Ladákh men, though I could undoubtedly trust a great deal



The Karakoram Pass (18,550 feet)

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to their feeling of loyalty to a sahib, yet it was necessary to keep this well up to the mark by seeing that they were well fed and as thoroughly comfortable as circumstances would permit, and by giving good pay and promising liberal rewards; but with my gallant little escort and my invaluable orderly I am proud to believe that, apart from any hope of rewards to come, they would have been ready to follow me cheerfully wherever I chose to take them, and that the desire to be a credit to the gallant regiments to which they belong was the guiding motive which led them to face so pluckily and readily as they did the long dreary marches, the trying cold night-watches, and the many other hardships which fell to their lot.

3. All preparations being completed and the dāk from Leh having reached safely, we left Sháhídúla on September 3rd, the party consisting of

*Composition of party  
and daily routine.*

- 6 Gurkhas (guard),
- 1 Orderly and surveyor.
- 1 Interpreter (an Argoon of Leh).
- 1 Cook (a Ladákhi).
- 2 Bálti raft-men (in charge of the mussuck raft).
- 5 Kirghiz.

Total 16 men, with 19 ponies (besides those which the Kirghiz rode), and 13 camels. Our usual order of march was to break up camp at daybreak, and to start as soon as the ponies had been collected and loaded—operations which, however, often took a considerable time, as the animals, which were always let loose at night, would often wander far away over the mountain slopes in search of grass. On the march two Gurkhas would form an advance guard, and the remainder came along in rear, helping the ponies over bad places, and keeping stragglers up. When the route required exploring, or the road was bad, I used to be with the advance party, accompanied by the guide and a man carrying a pick-axe or crow-bar, with which we would smooth the way for the ponies, or, if it was impossible to make a road, we would explore all round for some feasible way of getting round the obstacle. All the time Shahzad Mir, the orderly, would be surveying the

route, by pacing and prismatic compass bearings, the monotonous character of which can only be appreciated by one who has done it. At mid-day we would halt, for about half an hour, for a slight refreshment, and then walk on again till the setting sun warned us it was time to look out for some suitable spot for camping. Grass, fuel, and water are the three important requisites which an exploring party has to seek for in selecting a camping-ground. The last item was always plentiful, for, in such a country, we necessarily followed the courses of rivers, and would first ascend one stream to its sources near a pass, cross the pass, and descend another stream, then follow up another tributary, and so on through the whole country, always keeping to the course of a stream. There was no difficulty, therefore, about water, but grass and fuel were often very hard to obtain, for the mountain-sides are completely bare, and it was only here and there that we would meet with patches of jungle by the river-side. When a suitable spot had been selected and camp pitched, everyone would turn to cooking the evening meal, while I would write up my notes, and go through the day's survey with the orderly. Then followed dinner, for the jolly little Gurkhas always a very jovial affair, and, however hard a time they might be having, the evenings were sure to be enlivened by their laughter. After dinner, I generally took observations of the stars for latitude and time—a trying proceeding, sometimes, in the latter part of the exploration, when the thermometer was below zero and a biting wind blowing. Then, when all had turned in, a guard would be posted over the camp,—not a sentry marching up and down “in a smart and soldier-like manner,” but the Gurkhas taking it in turn to watch through the night, for two hours at a time, and prowling occasionally round the camp, so that we should know that one at least was awake to warn us in case of an attack by Kanjútis, whose favourite plan it is to effect a surprise by night. Such was our general daily routine.

4. On the 3rd September we left Sháhidúla, and proceeded by the Sokh-bulák Pass to the valley of the Yárkand River. The route led up
- Leave Sháhidúla.

the valley of a river on which were several patches of fine grazing, and till last year this had been well inhabited, but was now deserted on account of Kanjúti raids. This valley is known by the name of Khál Chuskún. Chuskún in Turki means resting-place, and Khál is the name of a holy man from Bokhára who is said to have rested here many years ago. The mountains bounding the north of this valley are very bold and rugged, with fine upstanding peaks and glaciers; but the range to the south, which Hayward calls the Aktágh Range, was somewhat tame in character, with round mild summits and no glaciers. The Sokh-bulák is an easy pass, and from its summit to the east could be seen the snowy range of the eastern Kuenlun Mountains, while to the west appeared a rocky mass of mountains culminating in three fine snowy peaks which Hayward mistook as belonging to the main Mústágh Range, but which, in fact, in no way approach to the height and magnificence of those mountains, and really belong to the Aghil Range, which is separated from the Mústágh Mountains by the valley of the Oprang River.

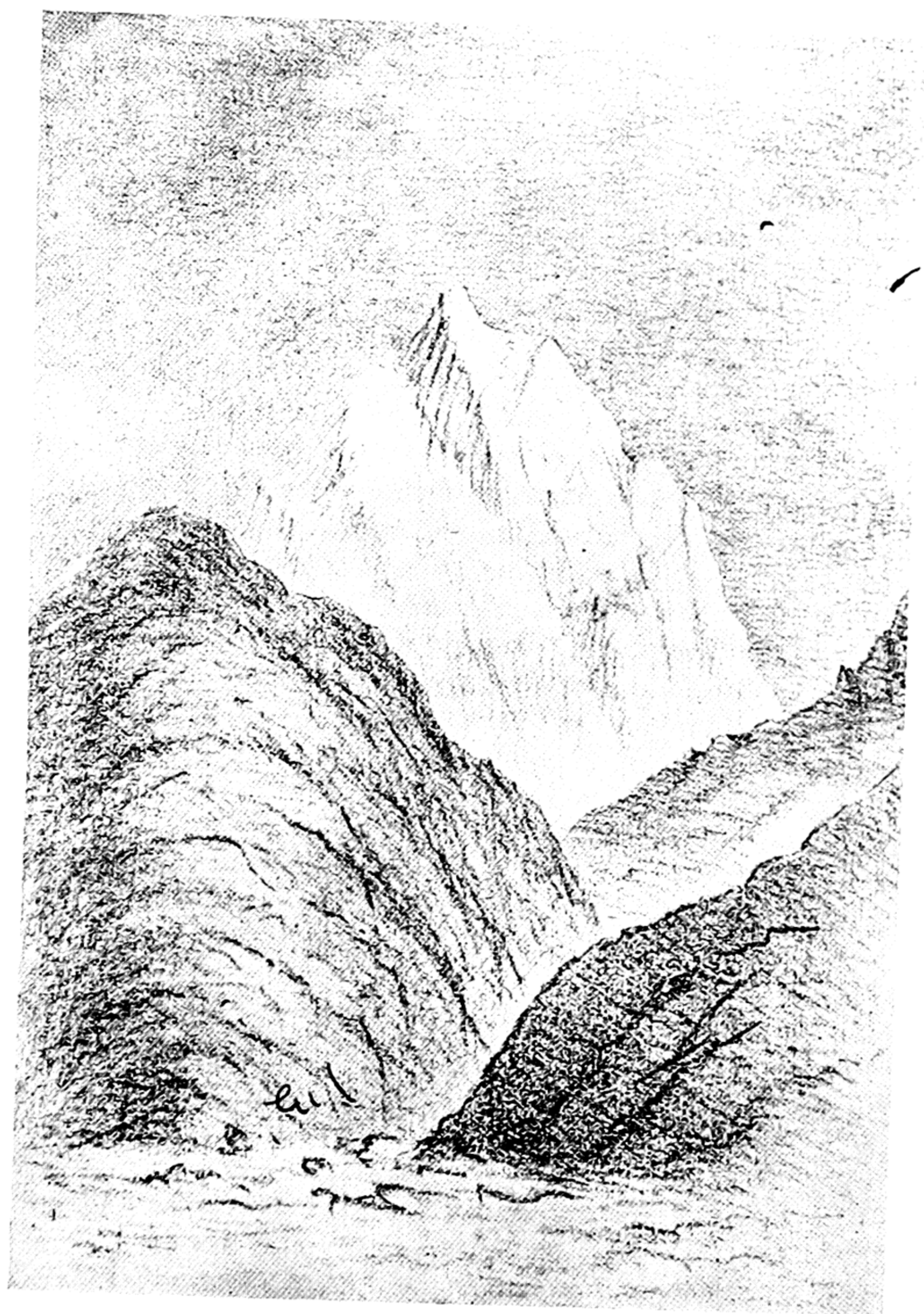
5. The wind was blowing with such violence on the summit of the pass that I found it impossible, after trying for three quarters of an hour, to obtain the height by boiling point of the thermometer. It has, however, been fixed by Hayward at 17,092 feet. Descending from the pass through a narrow rocky gorge, towards evening we reached the valley of the Yárkand River, and halted at an open strip of jungle known as Kirghiz Jangal. The valley is here a mile or more broad; the bottom is mostly covered with pebbles, with the stream running in many channels over it. The mountain-sides are steep, rocky precipices, and no grass or wood is seen, except at a few spots along the bed of the river.

On 5th September we made a short march of 11 miles to Kúlanúldí, a camping-ground called by this name on account of a kúlan, or wild ass, having once been found dead there. The weather at this time was delightful, very clear and bright—neither too hot nor too cold—just perfection for travelling.

The route, too, was easy and level, leading down the broad pebbly bed of the Yárkand River. The snowy peaks of the Kuenlun Mountains rose up to a height of 21,000 or 22,000 feet to the north, but the real summit of the Aghil Range to the south could only be seen occasionally in peeps up narrow ravines. Far down the valley of the Yárkand River to the westward could be seen a very prominent knot of peaks, the height of which was approximately fixed by Hayward at 23,000 feet.

6. On the following day we made an early start in order to make up for our short march yesterday, for I was anxious to push on rapidly towards Hunza, in case the Russian party from Kugiar might also be thinking of exploring in that direction. We made a march of 26 miles, passing on the way the camping-grounds of Chirághsaldi, where the route from Yárkand which I followed in 1887 joins in. The next day, September 7th, the valley narrowed considerably, and, as the stream runs at places between enormously high perpendicular cliffs, it is necessary to be constantly crossing and recrossing the river, which gets deeper and deeper as streams from either side aid to its volume; till at last it becomes too deep to be forded by laden ponies, and we were brought to a standstill at the same gorge where I was delayed two years ago. The river at this point was up to the ponies' backs, and flowing with a strong rapid current over a rocky bottom, so that it was out of the question to take our baggage over on ponies, and we had to halt for the night and wait till the morning, when the river is less deep than during the day-time, as its volume is then increased, owing to the sun melting the snows.

7. On this march we passed some ruins on a grassy plain called Kárásh-tárim (*i.e.*, the cultivated lands of Kárásh, a man who is said to have lived here some eighty years ago). There were remains of half a dozen huts and some smelting furnaces, and there were also signs of furrows where land had been cultivated. This strip of grass and jungle was over half a mile long and 600



Peak in the Kuen-Lun Range

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yards broad, and doubtless in former times was a flourishing spot. There were evident signs, too, of the existence of minerals, copper and iron, and possibly gold, too, in small quantities, may be found, for quartz and pieces of iron ore were abundant; while there are many traditions of the presence of minerals in these mountains, and the name of the country, Raskam, a corruption of Ráskán (a real mine), clearly shows that minerals may be expected.

8. Lower down we passed a considerable stream called the Bazár Darra, up which a route leads to Pákhpúlú. The size of the stream, 25 yards broad by  $1\frac{1}{2}$  feet deep, shows that the main range of the Kuenlun Mountains must recede considerably from here. I was informed by Turdi Kol that, after ascending the Bazár Darra River, and crossing a pass (the Kokalang), you do not enter the basin of the Tisnáf River, as you would in the case of the Yangi and Chirághsáldi Passes further east, but you descend into the valley of a river called the Kulanargú, which joins the Yárkand River, in its lower course, somewhere near Pil, and you have to cross another pass, the Takhta-kuran, before you enter the valley of the Tisnáf River; so that it is evident that a little to the west of the Chirághsáldi Pass the Kuenlun Range must split up, the two branches being separated by the Kuldnargú River. The lower part of this river is called Chúkshú, and is inhabited by Turkis, who are under Chinese jurisdiction, though they, like the Kirghiz, were refused protection from Kanjúti raids, and were told by the Chinese authorities that they lived outside the frontier passes, and must therefore expect no assistance.

9. At the junction of the Bazár Darra River with the Yárkand River we found the body of a tame yak with four bullets in it. The bullets were from a rifle: the animal had been dead apparently about twelve days, and it is probable had been shot by one of the small Russian party who, I afterwards heard from Lieutenant Bower, had been wandering about these parts separately from Colonel Pievtsof's party.

10. The great height of the mountains in these parts was very much impressed upon me on this day's march. I had noticed a hill which looked accessible, and from which it seemed probable that a good view of the summits of the Aghil Range on the south would be obtainable. I therefore set to work to climb it, but it was hard and tantalising work, for I had to make my way up a shale slope, and for every step upwards I seemed to slip quite as much backwards. In addition to this, one never seems to have any breath in one's body on these heights, and one has to spend as much time in puffing and panting as in going ahead. At last, however, I arrived at the top, and then all the reward to be obtained for my trouble was a magnificent bird's-eye view of the party, but nothing whatever of the Aghil Range beyond what could have been seen from the river-valley. Although the peak seemed of prodigious height from below, yet, on arriving at its summit, I found that the surrounding peaks continued to rise as high as ever, one after another, far, far above me, and I humbly realised to myself what Himalayan heights really are.

11. This ascent, however, enabled me to cross a spur and cut off a considerable bend of the river, and rapidly descending the mountain slopes I overtook my party at dusk, just as they were stopped at the gorge mentioned above. The river was dashing along at a furious rate over huge rocks and boulders, and was quite impassable for the ponies; so we were compelled to halt for the night, and the next morning we selected a place where the river bottom was least rugged, and crossed the river on camels, halting a few miles on the other side of the gorge, at a pleasant little camping-ground, called Karúl, at the junction of the Surakwát stream. Here there was plenty of thick green grass and shrubs quite 20 feet high; so we remained here the following day also, that the ponies might have a good feed of grass, the like of which they were not likely to see for a long time to come.



The Mustagh Mountains (Looking S.E. from the Aghil Pass)

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12. Turdi Kol took me a few miles lower down the river and showed me two other equally good camping-grounds, and he says that there is considerably more pasture in the lower part of this valley than in that of the Kárákásh River, and that in the old days the valley used to be populated and cultivated, and merchants used to go to and fro by the Mústágh Pass to Báltistán. Former Kanjúti raids. Kanjúti raids, however, put a stop to these, and a story is told of a great raid which took place at this gorge. The Kanjútis lay hid on the cliffs overhanging the river, and, as a man called, Khoja Mohammed was passing through with his family and a large party, they fired down on them, and afterwards attacked them with the sword, killing all the men and taking the women and children captive. Since that time this gorge has always been known by the name of Khoja Mohammed.

13. We now had to leave the valley of the Yárkand River and cross the Aghil Range into the valley of the Oprang River. I took the camels on one day's march further to the foot of the Aghil Pass, and then sent them back to Sháhidúla to bring on the second instalment of supplies, which I had arranged that Turdi Kol should bring to meet me at Chong Jangal, near the junction of the Oprang with the Yárkand River, after the exploration of the Sálto and Shimshál Passes. The ascent of the Surakwát stream towards the Aghil Pass is in parts very difficult, as the valley narrows to a gorge, and at two places we had to spend some hours in building up a staircase to enable the ponies to get round steep rocky cliffs. The numerous boulders, too, with which the valley bottom is strewn, make it very trying work for the ponies; but we eventually emerged on to a small plain, at the further end of which the main summits of the Aghil Range rise up like a wall in front of one rugged and uncompromising. Here we passed the same rock behind which, in 1887, I had spent the night lying in the open, as I had always been obliged to do during my passage of these mountains, for fear of attack from Kanjútis should I make my presence known by setting up a tent. On that night my

guides, who had not been by this route for many years, had forgotten whether we should ascend a stream to the right or another one on the left. If we had taken the wrong one, we should have been lost in the mountains, as the range is only passable at one point, the Aghil Pass. We fortunately took the proper course, and now, again retracing my former footsteps, on September 11th we crossed the remarkable depression in the range which is known as the Aghil Pass.

14. From here is obtained one of the most magnificent views it is possible to conceive; to the south-west you look up the valley of the Oprang River, which is bounded on either side by ranges of magnificent snowy mountains, rising abruptly from either bank, and far away in the distance you see the end of an immense glacier flowing down from the direction of the Sáltoro Pass. This scene was even more wild and bold than I had remembered it, the mountains rising up in a succession of sharp needle peaks like a great collection of Matterhorns, and not a living thing was to be seen nor a sound to be heard, for all was snow and ice, and rocky precipices, while these mountains are far too grand to support anything so insignificant as trees or vegetation of any kind.

15. Descending from the pass, we reached the valley of the Oprang River, and encamped at a small patch of grass, to which I had been led by the tracks of kulan or wild asses. I now had to prepare for the exploration of an entirely new track up to the Sáltoro Pass, and to find a way through the labyrinth of mighty mountains which had been seen from the pass. We should have to return to this point, so it was unnecessary to take with me the Gurkha escort, and I therefore decided to leave them with the heavy baggage at a patch of grass and jungle which I had seen through my telescope a little higher up the valley, while I made preparations to start on the morrow with Shahzad Mir, Shukar Ali, the Ladákhi who had crossed the Mústágh Pass with me two years ago, and a Bálti coolie. Ten days' supplies, including fuel, were to be

Magnificent view of  
the Mústágh Moun-  
tains.

Preparing to ex-  
plore the Sáltoro  
Pass.

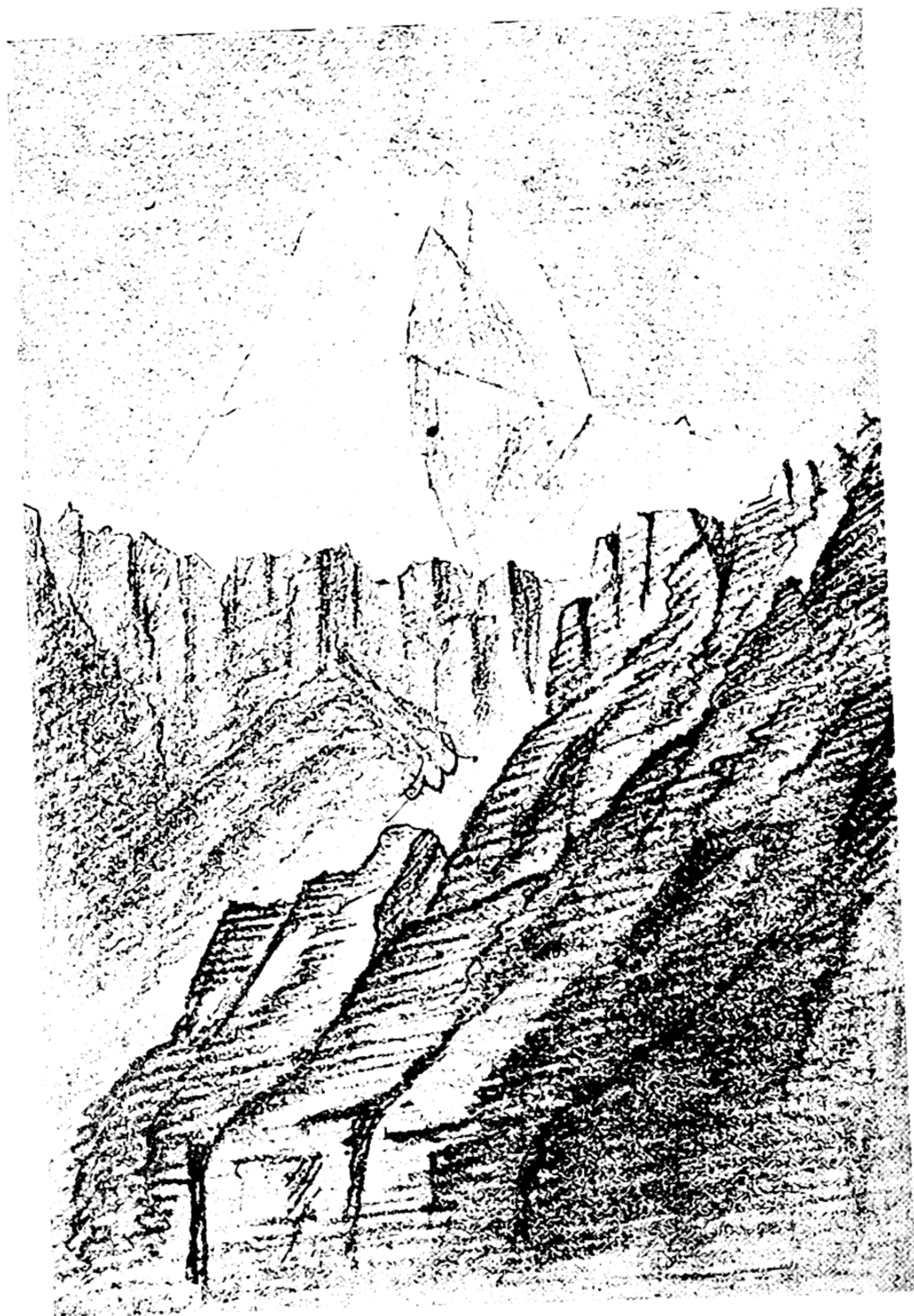
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Peak K.2 (28,278 feet) from the North.

taken, and five ponies, and I also took my own pony to ride whenever it was possible.

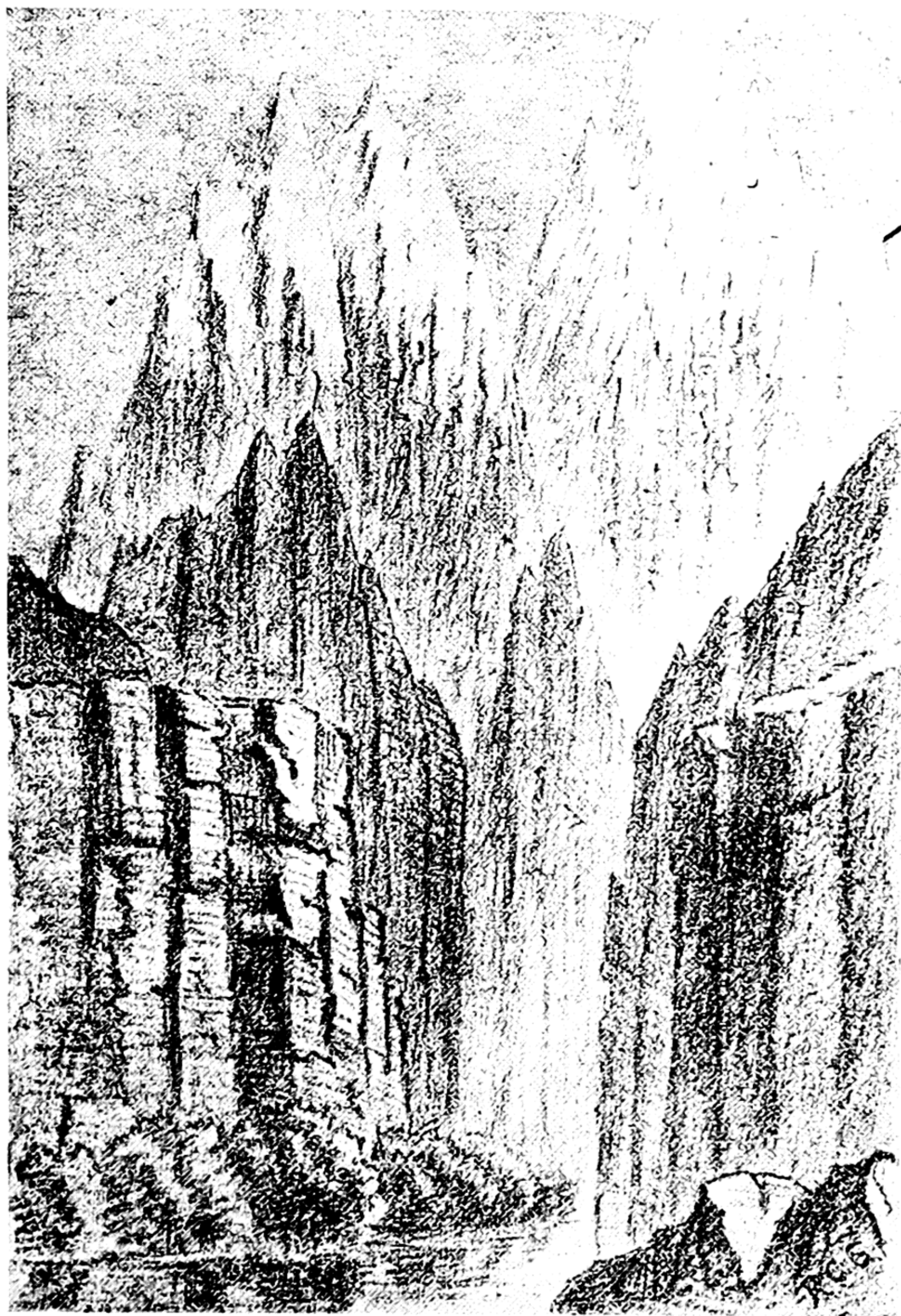
16. On September 12th we started for the exploration of the pass. The first march was easy enough, leading up the broad pebbly bed of the Oprang River. Up one of the gorges to the south we caught a magnificent view of the great peak K 2, 28,278 feet high, and we halted for the night at a spot from which a view both of K 2 and of the Gusherbrum peaks, four of which are over 26,000 feet, was visible. On the following day our difficulties really began. The first was the great glacier which we had seen from the Aghil Pass; it protruded right across the valley of the Oprang River, nearly touching the cliffs on the right bank; but fortunately the river had kept a way for itself, by continually washing away the ice at the end of the glacier, and so, by taking our ponies through the water, which was filled with blocks of ice, we were able to get round the end of the glacier, a great wall of ice of 150 to 200 feet high. This glacier runs down from the Gusherbrum Mountains, and is over one and a half miles broad at the end; the central portion is a mass of pure ice-peaks, and the view looking up it is very fine, with the sea of ice beneath, and the Gusherbrum in the distance towering up to a height of over 26,000 feet.

17. The passage round the end of the glacier was not unattended with danger, for the stream was swift and strong, and on my own pony I had to reconnoitre very carefully for points where it was shallow enough to cross, while there was also some fear of fragments from the great ice-wall falling down on the top of us when we were passing along close under the cliffs of ice which formed the end of the glacier. After getting round this obstacle, we entered a gravel plain, some three quarters of a mile broad, and were then encountered by another glacier running across the valley of the Oprang River. This proved to be the glacier we should have to ascend in order to reach the Sálto Pass, while the Oprang River could be seen to flow down from another glacier to the south; and still an-

other appeared to view, coming in a south-east direction and rising apparently not very far from the Kárákoram Pass. We were therefore now in an ice-bound region, with glaciers in front of us, glaciers behind us, and glaciers all round us. Heavy snow-clouds, too, were unfortunately collecting to increase our difficulties, and I felt that we should have a hard task to reach the pass.

18. On first looking at one of these glaciers it would appear impossible to take ponies up them, but the sides are always covered with moraine, and my experience in the exploration of the Mústágh Pass in 1887 showed that by carefully reconnoitring ahead it was generally possible to take the ponies for a considerable distance at least up such glaciers. We therefore now ascended the left side of the glacier, and halted for the night at a point from which a full view of the pass at the upper end of the glacier was obtained. The pass, indeed, seemed quite close, but distances in the rare, clear atmosphere of these high mountains are very deceptive; and though my orderly, inexperienced in mountaineering, on first seeing the pass, was delighted to think that we should reach its summit on the following day, we did not actually approach it for three days yet to come, and our adventures on the way may perhaps be best described by extracts from my journal written day by day on the spot.

19. "*September 14th.*—A very hard, trying, and unsatisfactory day. I started off this morning full of zeal, ready to go anywhere, and do anything, but finished up utterly tired out and careless of what may happen. These glaciers are terribly hard going, and after working the whole day we are only as far as where I originally hoped to have arrived last evening, and the pass is as far off as ever. I started off early this morning, before camp was struck, and climbed the mountain range on the left bank of the valley to a gap, from which I hoped to get a view of whatever might be on the other side. After a stiff climb of nearly 2,000 feet I was only rewarded by seeing the great glacier which flows down from the Gusherbrum and



The Khoja Mohammed Gorge (On the Yarkand River)

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another ridge on the opposite side. Snow was falling, and the view which I had expected to get was hidden by the clouds. These are quite a peculiarity of this country and the higher regions of the Himalayas. They are extremely light and almost imperceptible. A snowy peak stands out sharp and distinct before you; suddenly its outline becomes hazy and more and more difficult to distinguish, till it disappears altogether: it has been hidden in a snow-cloud, though the cloud itself is scarcely discernible.

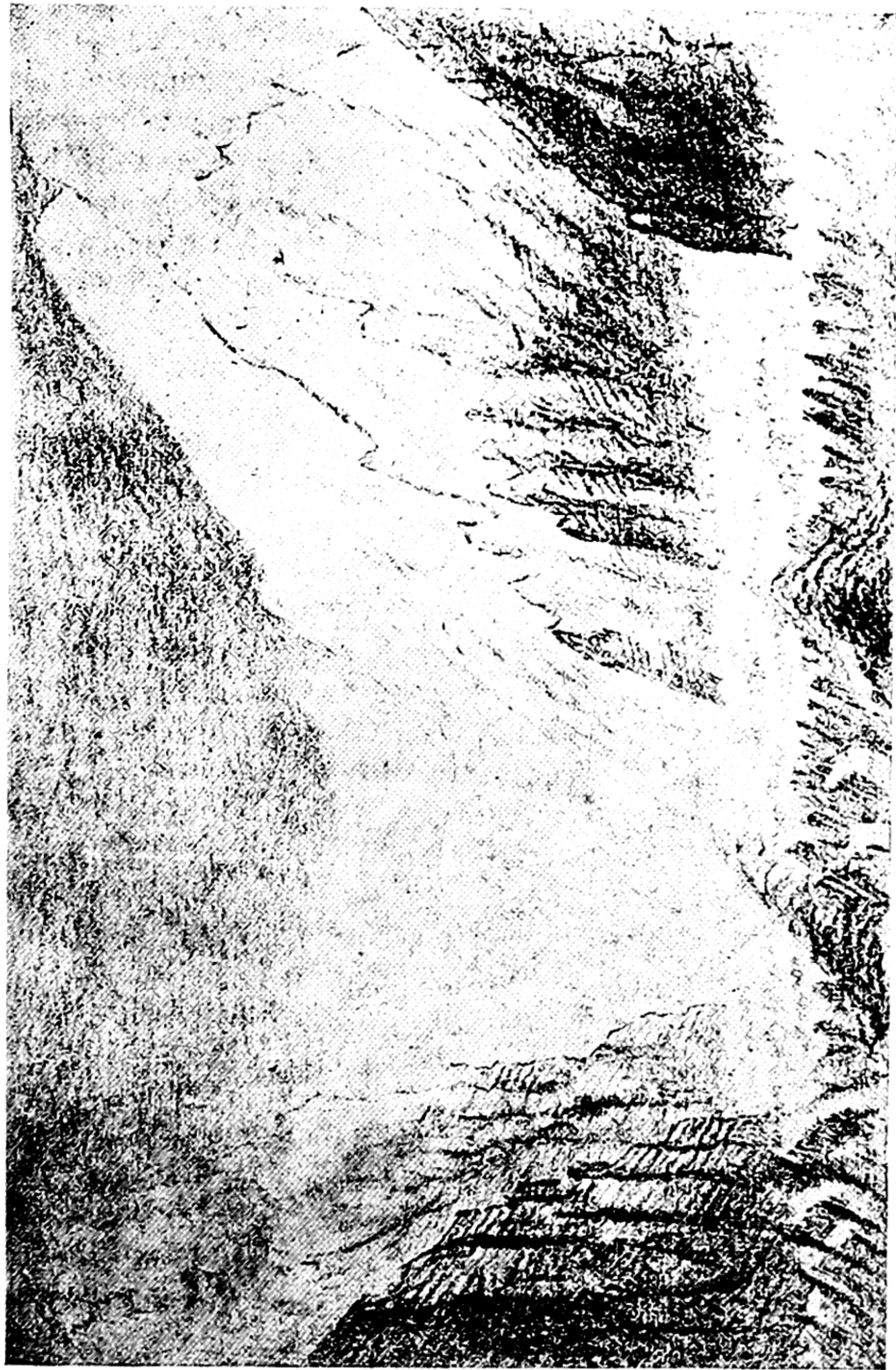
20. "Rejoining my party we started off to tackle the glacier, and at first the way was good enough,—that is, we could get along at the rate of one and a half miles an hour—and, as things seemed fairly smooth for some way ahead; I went off to make a small exploration of a glacier coming down from the westward. But after tumbling about on it for some time, and getting two nasty falls, I was brought up by a steep ice-slope, running down the mountain-side, which I had tried to ascend. I had got up it for about 200 feet, clinging to projecting rocks, but, when these failed me, I had to give up the attempt, as it was too dangerous to cross the slope by myself without the aid of ropes. So I was again unsuccessful, and making my way back to my party, found them halted in front of a great mass of accumulated ice fallen from the ice-peaks above. It was a wonderful sight to look at the great walls and blocks of pure ice, white on the surface and a beautiful transparent green where it was broken. But it was a hard thing to encounter on the way. We formed a plan of carrying the loads over the ice débris, and swimming the ponies across a strip of water, but on exploring ahead we found it even worse, and there was nothing for it but to go back some distance and try another way. This we did, but were yet again brought to a standstill by some crevasses, and here we halted for the day.

21. "*September 15th.*—We went back again, and at last found a way which led us straight up the centre of the glacier. We got along famously, and are now encamped at the head of the glacier,

close under the pass, which we will attempt to-morrow: It looks rather like a repetition of the Mústágh, rising like a wall for about 2,000 feet, and nothing but snow and ice. It may, however, turn out easier upon closer acquaintance.

22. "*September 16th* —To-day we made an unsuccessful attempt to cross the Sáltoro Pass. I had given orders to be called at 2 A.M., and after having had some chota hazri, and made all necessary preparations, we started at 3-30 A.M. It was snowing hard and freezing hard, while dense clouds overhead hid the moon, so that we had barely sufficient light to find our way by. Yesterday afternoon Shukar Ali and I had reconnoitred ahead, and determined the general line of advance and the best point at which to attack the pass, and we now proceeded steadily up the névé at the head of the glacier. At first crevasses were frequent, some visible—great staring rents in the ice 50 or 60 feet deep,—others invisible, being covered with snow: these last were the dangerous ones, for the snow would suddenly give way under you, and your leg would go down a deep, dark hole. But though this frequently happened we had no accidents, and the higher we reached the less frequent became the crevasses, though the snow became softer, and it was heavy work trudging along sinking knee-deep at every step.

23. "Day now began to dawn, but the heavy snowstorm did not cease, and we could only see the lower parts of the mountains, while their summits were hidden in the clouds. We were making towards a ravine, up which we had made out could be the only possible way to the top of the pass, and were rounding an icy slope forming one side of the ravine, when suddenly we heard a report like thunder, and then a rushing sound. We knew at once that it was an avalanche; it was coming from straight above us, and I felt in that moment greater fear than I ever yet have done, for we could see nothing, but only heard this tremendous rushing sound coming straight down upon us. One of the men called out to run, but we could not, for we were on an ice-slope, up which we were hewing our-way with



The Saltero Pass

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an axe. The sound came nearer and nearer, then came a cloud of snow-dust, and the avalanche rushed past us in the ravine by our side. Had the avalanche happened a quarter of an hour later, or had we started a quarter of an hour earlier, we should have been in the ravine and buried by the avalanche.

24. "We now continued the ascent of the ice-slope, hoping we might find a road by that way, but <sup>Compelled to turn back.</sup> we were brought up by a great rent in the ice, a yawning chasm with perpendicular walls of solid ice. This effectually put an end to our attempt to cross the pass, for I dared not descend into the ravine through fear of avalanches. We therefore were obliged to return and give up all hopes of reaching the top of the Sáltoro Pass. On our way back we saw another avalanche rush down the mountain-side, and over the very path we had made in ascending, covering up our actual footsteps left in the snow. Seeing, therefore, how dangerous it was to remain where we were, we hastened on, and very thankful I was when we again reached the open glacier, and were out of the reach of avalanches. Snow continued to fall heavily, and we heard the reports of avalanches on the mountains all round us. Shukar Ali said that if the sky were to clear, and we could wait a week for the snow to settle, we might find a way over the pass. But in any case it would have been a piece of difficult mountaineering, and as I had been sent to find out merely whether it was a reasonably practicable military route, and as, moreover, I could not afford to wait a week in a place where neither fuel nor grass could be obtained, and where everything was buried in snow and ice, I determined upon returning to my camp on the Oprang River, and giving up any further attempt at crossing the pass. We accordingly hastened back to our camp at the head of the glacier, packed up, and marched down the glacier, the snowstorm still continuing.

25. "*September 17th.*—A heavy snowstorm during the night, and our little camp in the middle of the glacier looked very cheerless this morning. <sup>Heavy snowstorms.</sup> Ponies, tents, baggage, and everything were covered

with snow, and snow was still falling heavily when we struck camp and continued our march down the glacier. We were able to make a double march, as we had the track marked out, and the bad places improved by our march up; and now we are once again on *terra firma*, encamped where we can get grass for the ponies and a certain amount of fuel, and nice smooth sand to lie upon at night, instead of the thin layer of sharp stones which separated us from two or three hundred feet of solid ice on the glacier.

26. "The length of this glacier is 18 miles, and its average breadth half a mile; it is fed by three smaller glaciers on the west and one on the east. At its upper part, immediately under the pass, it is a smooth undulating snow-field about a mile and a half in width. Lower down this névé is split up into crevasses, which increase in size the further down we get. Then the surface gradually breaks up into a mass of ice-domes, which lower down become sharp needle peaks of pure white ice. On each side lateral gravel moraines appear, and other glaciers join, each with its centre of white ice-peaks and its lateral moraines, and preserving each its own distinct course down the valley, until some three miles from its termination in the Oprang River, when the icy peaks are all melted down and the glacier presents the appearance of a billowy mass of moraine, and would look like a vast collection of gravel heaps, were it not that you see, here and there, a cave or a cliff of ice; showing that the gravel forms really only a very thin coating on the surface, and that beneath is all pure solid ice. This ice is of an opaque white and not so green and transparent as other glaciers I have seen, and the snow at the head of the glacier was different to any I had seen before, for beneath the surface, or when it was formed into lumps, it was of the most lovely pale transparent blue. Yesterday I forgot to mention, too, that every flake of snow that fell in the storm was a perfect hexagonal star, most beautiful and delicate in form. The mountains on either side of the valley, especially on the eastern side, are extremely rugged and precipitous, forming little or no resting-place

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The Aghil Pass

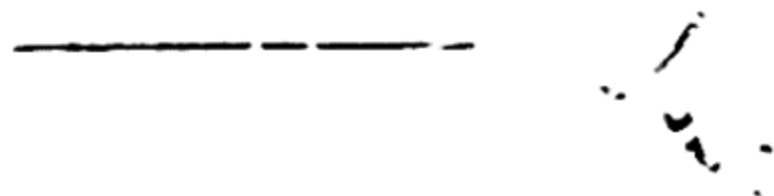
for the snow, which drains off immediately into the glacier below. The western range, the main Mústágh Range, was enveloped in clouds nearly the whole time, and I only occasionally caught a glimpse of some peaks of stupendous height, one of them, the Gusherbrum, over 26,000 feet, and others 24,000 feet. The snowfall on these mountains must be very considerable, and it seems that this knot of lofty mountains attracts the great mass of the snow-clouds, and gets the share which ought to fall on the Kárákoram, while these latter, being of less height, attract the clouds to a less degree, and are in consequence almost bare of snow.

27. "*September 18th.*—Another heavy snowstorm during the night. Shukar Ali and Abdula, the  
Return to main camp. Bálti, had stayed behind yesterday with my pony, who almost died on the march, and was unable to move a step beyond half-way. The wretched ponies had had no grass for four days; they had been well snowed upon every night, while at these high altitudes you cannot give them more than four pounds of grain, as, if they have too much, they lose their breath easily, and die in consequence. I rode into Darbin Jangal, and sent back supplies for the men and ponies. It seemed the height of civilisation getting back to a table, a chair and a bed, and to be again inside a tent large enough to stand up in."

28. As a result, therefore, of my explorations in the direction of the Sáltoro Pass, and of my exploration of the Mústágh Passes in 1887, it may unquestionably be said that there is no route, practicable for ordinary military purposes, leading over the Mústágh Mountains into Báltistán. The northern frontier of Kashmir is in fact protected, in these parts, by an immense region of glaciers, which form an impenetrable barrier to any possible invasion; and so effectual is this barrier, that even the bold and hardy Kanjútis, whose pet desire it is to invade Báltistán and kidnap the sheep-like Báltis, have of late years been compelled to give up their raids in this direction, owing to the vast accumulation of ice upon the passes; and though they have made attempts to find a way into the

Results of exploration: no route into Báltistán.

country, have never, since the closing of the Mústágh Pass some thirty years ago, succeeded in doing so. There need be no fear, therefore, of an invasion by a European Power on Skárdú in Báltistán.





The Aghil Range (from the North)

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## CHAPTER III.

## EXPLORATION OF THE SHIMSHÁL PASS.

1. We set out for the Shimshál Pass—2. A gap in the range—is it a Pass?—3. Ascending another glacier—4. Joviality of the Gurkhas—5. Crevasses and snowstorms—6. More crevasses and more snow—7. Beautiful sights on the glacier—8. Searching for a route—9. Glorious view of the Mústágh Mountains—10. A fall through the ice—11. Preparing for a last attempt—12. Again compelled to retreat—13. Back again at Suget Jangal—14. Description of the glacier—15. March down the Oprang River—16. Dangerous fords—17. Groping our way—18. More dangerous fords—19. Plucky passage of the river by the Gurkhas—20. Reach Chong Jangal—21. Arrival of a dák—22. And of Turdi Koi with supplies—23. Start back again to explore the real Shimshál Pass—24. Approaching the Kanjúti outpost—25. Hostile reception—26. Difficulty about the Kirghiz—27. Suspicions of the Kanjútis—28. The Shimshál Pass—29. Reconnoitring the southern side—30. A letter of welcome from the Rájá—31. Return over the Shimshál Pass—32. Satisfaction of the Kirghiz at our management of the Kanjútis—33. Oppression in Kanjút and attempt to raid on Báltistán—34. Return to Chong Jangal.

The question of the practicability of routes into Báltistán

We set out for the  
Shimshál Pass.

being decided, it became necessary now to examine the passes into Hunza. The first known pass is called the Shimshál or Shingshál, and is the one used by the Kanjútis when issuing from Hunza to carry on their raids on the Yárkand road. As mentioned in the last chapter, I had now with me, as guide, a man who had been taken over this pass on the previous year as a captive from Sháhidúla, and under his guidance we now set out to explore the range in the neighbourhood of the Shimshál Pass.

2. On September 21st we left Darbin Jangal and march-

A gap in the range —  
is it a Pass?

ed down the valley of the Oprang River and up the tributary flowing from the Mústágh Pass to Suget Jangal. From here a large glacier could be seen flowing down from the westward, and at the end of it a gap in the main range. My guide knew nothing of a pass into Hunza in this direction, but as the gap was situated exactly at the point where the Shimshál Pass is marked on our maps, I determined to make an attempt to enter Hunza by that way, and if possible afterwards return by the other Shimshál Pass known to the Kirghiz. I therefore left the heavy baggage under the charge of one Gurkha and a Bálti coolie

and set out for the exploration of the glacier with twelve ponies carrying supplies and fuel for twelve days for my party and escort. On September the 23rd we left Suget Jangal, and by mid-day were again on a glacier, and our experiences there may, perhaps, be better told by again making extracts from my diary.

3. "*September 24th.*—We had rather a rough march up the glacier to-day, but not so bad as the route to the Sáltoro Pass. The way to attack these glaciers is evidently this: first to keep along the side of the glacier, on the lateral moraine, close to the mountain-side; you here get some very fair going, though also, at times, some very nasty pieces, where great, rough, sharp boulders are heaped one on the other, like at the mouth of a quarry. Presently the glacier closes in on the mountain-side, and you have then to take a favourable opportunity of plunging into the centre of the glacier, and then ascending the part of it which is best covered with gravel moraine. Some very careful steering is here necessary to keep clear of the crevasses, and the ponies, and men too, often have a very hard time of it, trying to keep their legs in ascending some of the slopes where the gravel barely covers the ice. We took our plunge into the middle of this glacier at mid-day to-day. Snow was falling, and at 4-30 the clouds became so heavy, and it was altogether so threatening, that I thought it best to halt. Of course, no grass or fuel are obtainable, but we brought two pony-loads of wood with us, so are quite happy, though this is not a particularly cheerful-looking spot with the snow falling hard, the great white ice-peak of the glaciers rising all round, and the mountains hidden by the heavy snow-clouds, and no place to encamp on but a very stony hollow.

4. "The Gurkha havildar was in great form—he had a joke about getting hold of some "narm pattar" (soft stones), which kept him and all the Gurkhas in roars of laughter. I asked him where he had got the joke from, and he said some Sahib had made it at Kabul!

5. "September 25<sup>th</sup>.—Set out this morning in a heavy snowstorm—so heavy that even the bases of the mountains on each side of the glacier were at times not visible, and the summits were not seen till mid-day, and even then only in glimpses. Immediately on leaving camp we were confronted by a series of very bad crevasses, running right across our path. Things looked hopeless at one time, and it was like finding a way through a maze. The naik and I went on ahead, and by going from one end of each crevasse to the other, we managed in every case to find a way across. though to advance a hundred yards we would have to go at least six times that distance, and once we completely lost our front in the maze and the snowstorm, and were wandering off up a side glacier, till I recognised we were in the wrong direction by a hill-side appearing through the mist.

6. "We finally got clear of the bad crevasses, and then had a fairly clear run for a couple of miles, and were beginning to congratulate ourselves that we had got over the worst of the glacier, when we came upon another series of crevasses of the most desperate description—the ice, in fact, was so split up that, though the whole party explored in all directions, we could find no possible way of getting the ponies along. I therefore decided upon encamping, and going on to-morrow with a few men lightly loaded to the pass. I had some tiffin—rather an important point on these occasions when the time of the real tussle has arrived, and you are feeling rather down with things in general—and then started off to explore a route for the men to follow to-morrow; but although I went in and out everywhere along the whole front, I found it impossible to get ahead. I then returned to camp, had a cup of good hot tea and set out again backwards, but it was no go. We are in a regular *cul de sac*, ahead are impassable crevasses, and on each side are the main lines of the glacier-peaks of pure ice, and still more impracticable than the crevasses.

7. " You don't feel much inclined to admire scenery when its very grandeur has been the cause of stopping you, but the glacier here is really something very magnificent. A great sea of ice comes sweeping down from the Mústágh range to the south, and makes here a great bend; and it is this bend which has been the cause of stopping us, for it has cracked the ice, just in the same way as the skin is cracked at the bend of the knuckle, and great crevasses have been formed, some so deep that you cannot see the bottom. But the finest sights of all are the ice peaks broken into every description of fantastic shape, with great fringes of drooping icicles hanging from their sides, and ice-caverns the entrances to which were closed by lines of long beautiful icicles.

8. "*September 26th.*—Started back down the glacier, snow still falling heavily. The Gurkha naik, Searching for a route. Shahzad Mir, and myself kept looking everywhere for some way of getting off the glacier on to the mountain-side, where it was evident we should find a passable road. Once or twice we got right up to the edge of the glacier, but just a few crevasses and broken crags of ice always prevented us from actually reaching *terra firma*. I was just giving up when I saw what seemed to be a practicable route. The others stayed behind, saying it was impossible, but I went on and on, and at last reached the edge of the glacier, and only a pond heaped up with blocks of ice, and frozen over, separated me from the mountain-side. The ice was very treacherous, but, by feeling about with my alpen-stock, I got across safely, and then, going along the mountain-side for some distance, found a very promising route which I followed up for some little distance.

9. " The sky had now cleared, and I had a glorious view of the Mústágh Mountains such as I shall never forget. Their appearance, indeed, was truly magnificent as they rose up in solemn grandeur for thousands of feet above, sublime and solitary in their glory, their sides covered with the accumulated snow of countless ages, and their valleys filled with glistening glaciers. With infinite toil

and difficulty I had insinuated my way through the chinks in their seemingly impregnable armour of rock and ice, and my feelings now as I looked on the wonderful scene before me can only be appreciated by one who has himself penetrated the great mountain solitudes of the Himalayas and stood alone, as I was then, deep in the inmost recesses of the mightiest range of mountains in the world ; separated from the haunts of civilisation by chain after chain of inhospitable mountains, and far from the abodes of even the wild and hardy hill-men of the Himalayas. Alone, where no white men had ever yet set foot—where all was snow and ice, pure, white, and unblemished, and where not even the rustle of a single leaf, the faintest murmur of a stream, or the hum of the smallest insect, rose to break the spell of calm repose which reigned around. I seemed, indeed, to be intruding on the abode of some great invisible but all-pervading Deity—the Emblem of Eternal Rest—and to have risen from the world beneath to a higher land where the trials and the troubles of humanity were unknown ; where all was wrapt in that stern and grand repose of the mountains—a Quiet, calm and deep, and made impressive from the feeling that beneath its placid surface great and mighty forces were slowly and silently yet constantly at work. Amid surroundings of such grand sublimity, the overpowering presence of the mountains, and the profound and solemn silence, produced in me impressions such as I shall never forget, and a deep feeling of reverential awe and admiration at such marvellous works came over me, as I looked at those great snowy heights which remain there in their grandeur, immoveable and unchangeable through eternity.

10. “ On returning to the lake I found the naik and Shah-

*A fall through the ice.*      *zad* Mir had followed me, the former having got across all right, but Shahzad had gone through the ice up to his waist. The water was far out of his depth, and he had only saved himself by clinging on to a large block of ice close by. On returning across the lake I also went through twice, but as I thought the ice would be stronger by to-morrow I hurried after the rest of the party, whom I had ordered to stop at a certain point. I

then brought back my own kit, some supplies, grain for the ponies, and a pony-load of wood, to a spot as near to the lake as ponies could go, while the Gurkhas go back to Suget Jangal.

LI. "My intention is to try and reach the pass with three men carrying loads. I at first meant to go without a tent, but as it is still snowing hard, and a bitter wind blowing, while last night the thermometer was down to  $6^{\circ}$ , and at the head of the glacier would probably be below zero, I have decided upon taking the small servants' pāl which I am using on this detached expedition. We will carry the poles as alpen-stocks, leave the pegs behind, as we can use stones instead, so that the whole weight of the tent will not be more than 20lb, and we will all four sleep in it at night. The weather is anything but cheering, and this snow is very trying, especially for the men who have to do the cooking in the open. Thank goodness I brought only hill-men well accustomed to this sort of thing. I knew well what it would be, and would on no account bring a plains-servant, or even a Kashmiri, with me. The packs arrived covered thick with snow, and neither my men nor myself have a dry pair of boots to our names, nor can we dry anything, for we can only afford a very small fire which is not sufficient to dry a thing faster than the falling snow wets it again. The floor of my tent is snow, under that a few inches of gravel, and then two or three hundred feet of ice. However, a good comfortable poshtin like I have helps one to defy a lot of discomfort. Each of the men have also a good poshtin, which I provided them with at Sháhidúla, so we are pretty cheery in spite of the snow and cold.

12. "*September 27th.*—A fine sunny morning at last. We started off three men (Shukar Ali, Ramzan, and Abdula) carrying loads, and I had got a light load ready to carry myself, but the men would not hear of it; they are capital good chaps and game for anything. We got down to the lake all right, and there we were utterly stopped. The lake is fed from the melting of the glacier, but, as the sun had not appeared for

the last few days, the water had diminished several feet, while the layer of ice remained at the top. This layer had now fallen through here and there, and though yesterday it was treacherous enough, to-day it was utterly impracticable, especially for men with loads. I ventured a few yards on to the ice, but seeing it falling through all round me with sharp reports, I hurried back, and we had then to give up all hopes of reaching the pass. We returned to our late camping ground, loaded up the ponies, and started off back towards Suget Jangal. On the way we passed another pond frozen over since we passed it two days ago. The ridge of ice all round showed where the surface had been, but all the centre had fallen through. Snow began to fall again in the afternoon and is still falling, but this is our last (sixth) night on the glacier.

13. "*September 28th.*—A really glorious morning and fine

Back again at Suget  
Jangal.

all day, clear and bright as it can be only at these great mountain heights. I set off at a good pace ahead of the men and ponies, so as to get back to the luxury of my big tent, table, chairs, books and papers, as quick as possible. As I got near the Suget Jangal camp, the men, when they saw me alone, came rushing out, thinking something desperate must have happened. I told them that all the matter was that I wanted a change of lower garments and some tiffin, for I had had to ford the glacier stream of melted ice, and so cold that it took the breath completely out of one's body as one waded through the water. It was glorious getting into some clean dry clothing, then into a nice comfortable ulster, and then, after a good tiffin, sitting in a real chair, and having a good read at the papers. Life is again worth living and heart-breaking glaciers things of the past. My appearance, though, at present is not becoming, for my eyes are bloodshot and inflamed from partial snow-blindness, and my nose, ears, and lips are blistered from the bitter wind, while my hands are all cut and scratched from frequent falls on the slippery glacier, and my knuckles cracked from the cold. But I, and all the party, are very fit and well—far better, I think. than when we left India."

14. The glacier we did our best to surmount I have called the Crevasse Glacier, on account of the great number and size of crevasses, which were wider, deeper, and far more frequent than I have seen on any other glacier, and this I attribute to the bends. The widest branch comes from the south, and makes a bend almost at right angles at the furthest point which we reached, and is here joined by a longer but narrower branch from the pass. The length is about 24 miles, and the breadth from 1,000 to 1,200 yards. It ends at an elevation of 13,000 feet above sea-level, at a projecting spur of black rock, which is opposite to a stream issuing from a small glacier running down from the second peak on the southern side. Its lower extremity, for more than two miles, is entirely covered with moraine, but higher up it presents the magnificent spectacle of a sea of pure white peaks of ice, with numerous similar glaciers of smaller size running down to it from the lofty snowy mountains on the southern side. On the north only one glacier of any size joins in, and it is evident that the southern range gets by far the greater portion of the snow-fall, although the mountains on the north are in some cases very little inferior in height. The Crevasse Glacier seemed to me to be retiring; at any rate I should certainly say it was not advancing, for the moraine was deposited some few hundred yards in advance of the ice of the glacier, and there were marks of glacial action on the mountain sides far above the present level of the glacier. The small glaciers—those resembling clotted cream—on the mountain slopes were certainly retiring. The glacier was very much lower in the centre than at the sides, and at the sides were the remains of successive beds of conglomerate, compact and hard, and level at the top, of a different character altogether to glacial moraine, so that it appeared as if there had formerly been a thick bed of conglomerate filling up the valley, and that it had now been swept out by the glacier. This, however, is only in the lower half, where the mountain slopes are comparatively gentle and formed of shingle: higher up, the sides are precipitous, and there are no

signs of the conglomerate formation. The fall of the glacier as far as we went was 2,280 feet in 24,400 yards, or about  $\frac{1}{32}$ . Its general direction is N.N.W.

15. On September 30th, after a day's rest, we resumed our   
March down the journey down the valley of the Oprang   
Oprang River. River, and halted that night at a fine patch of grass about a quarter of a mile long, to see which was a welcome relief after the never-ending snow and rocks usually met with. Our next day's march was a very disagreeable one, as a bitter wind, which brings with it clouds of gritty dust, was blowing straight in our faces up the valley. My pony to-day, although he had been left at Suget Jangal while I was exploring the glacier, and although he was a hardy Yarkandi, had now become so weak that three men could not drag him along, and at last he sank down by the way, and as we could not geth' im up again I had to shoot him. I will again now extract from my journal.

16. "*October 2nd.*—Another march down the valley of the Oprang River, and a very trying one,   
Dangerous fords. for we had to cross the river eleven times, and, as it has now become more than waist deep, and very rapid, running over a bottom covered with boulders, it was at times dangerous work. As I ride the only pony without a load, I used to do the reconnoitring for fords, but even when a place fairly passable had been found, it was hard to keep the ponies straight to it; they would drift away with the current into deep places, and the packs got horribly wet. The crossings were most exciting work, everybody shouting with all his might at the ponies, and throwing stones at them to keep them straight. In spite of it all you would see the pony with your bag of clothes, or your bedding, fall into a pool with the water nearly over his back. Most of the men got on the top of the packs, but some waded through the water and they had a rough time of it.

17. "We passed the Shimshál River, up which lies the   
Groping our way. route to Kanjút, but we have run rather short of grain for the ponies, on account of their having had more than their usual share on the glaciers,

where they could get no grass, and as I calculate, from observations for latitude last night, that we cannot be far from Chong Jangal, where I hope to find Turdi Kol with a fresh relay of supplies, I thought it best to go there first, and hope to get there to-morrow at mid-day if my calculations are right. There is no map at all of these parts, and at Sháhidúla I could find no one who had ever been down the Oprang River to Chong Jangal, so I am, as it were, groping in the dark at present. But at Súrukwát (our last point on the Yárkand River) I got Turdi Kol to point out to me the general course which the Yárkand River followed below that; this I marked down roughly on the map which I am constructing; then I have worked out my survey up to this point, and checked it by star observations, and calculate that I ought now to be about half a march from Chong Jangal.

18. "*October 3rd.*—Put not your trust in rivers. This wretched Oprang River, after continuing in a very uniform direction up till now, just when it ought to have struck Chong Jangal turns round, and goes back again, upsetting all my calculations, and after a very hard and trying day we are still far from Chong Jangal, although at about noon I thought we had really reached there. I saw ahead one valley running in a direction east to west, and another in a northerly direction, and at the junction a patch of good jungle and grass. This exactly answered to Turdi Kol's description of the position of Chong Jangal, and it was a great blow when I found that instead of the Yárkand River flowing down the valley ahead in a *westerly* direction, it was still this Oprang River which flowed down it in an *easterly* direction, having deliberately turned round and gone backwards. It was very trying, because it has to be crossed and recrossed so many times, and each crossing becomes more difficult, and even dangerous. Three times to-day, in reconnoitring for a ford, my pony was as nearly as possible washed off his legs, and the water came over the seat of the saddle, leaving only the pony's head and the upper part of my body out of the water, while I was expecting every minute to have to swim for it. The water, too,

is fearfully cold, for there is not a drop of water in this river that does not come from glaciers. And to add to our troubles, a nasty wind, with clouds of gritty sand, was blowing down the valley the whole day. Altogether it was one of the most trying days one has on a journey, though I ought not to complain anything like so much as the unfortunate men who had to wade through the icy water.

19. "The Gurkhas managed to clamber along the hill-sides like goats, but unfortunately at the end of the day they were at the other side of the river to our camp. We had halted because we had not been able to find a ford; for the water had risen, as it always does in the afternoon, on account of the melting of the glaciers during the day. I was very anxious as to how I should get them across, and was just mounting a pony to try the stream, when the first two Gurkhas appeared on the other side, and, without cogitating about it for half an hour like I had done, promptly proceeded to wade through the water in the most happy-go-lucky way. I shouted to them to stop till I had tried it, but on account of the roar of the water they did not hear. How they got through I don't know, for the water came nearly up to their arm-pits; it was icy cold, the current very strong, and the bottom covered with boulders, and I know from our experiences in Manchuria what that means. However, they got across all right and landed with a broad grin on their faces, as if crossing rivers like this were the greatest possible joke. I then rode across leading another pony with me. I took up one Gurkha behind me from the other side, and mounted the remaining two on the second pony, which I had brought across. We then started back, and once or twice my pony gave some ugly lurches and I thought we were gone; but we got across all right, and I gave the Gurkhas a drop of whisky all round to cheer their stout little hearts.

20. "October 4th.—Arrived at Chong Jangal at last, but no Turdi Kol, no supplies, and no dak! though all may arrive within the next day or two. I thought we were never going to arrive here. We

Plucky passage of the river by the Gurkhas.

Reach Chong Jangal.

rounded spur after spur, and at each I expected to see the Yárkand River, and Chong Jangal on the other side. In the afternoon, after rounding a great bend of the Oprang River, we entered a wide pebbly plain, and in the distance could see an extensive jungle. I thought it might be Chong Jangal, but could see no signs of the Yárkand River. After riding a mile or two, however, I crossed a considerable stream running over the pebbly plain. I at first thought it might be the Yárkand River, but it was so much smaller than when we left it at Súrukwát, and instead of being a muddy colour as it then was, was a clear blue, so I decided that it could not be the Yárkand River, and that Chong Jangal must be on the other side of the next spur, several miles ahead. I was hugely delighted therefore when, on the baggage coming up, Surak Bai, the Kirghiz guide, said that this really was the Yárkand River after all, though very diminished since we last saw it, on account of the melting of the snows, owing to the lateness of the season, having almost ceased, and that the jungle ahead was Chong Jangal. I hurried on then to see if Turdi Kol had arrived, but was disappointed to find no traces of him. This is a very large stretch of jungle for these parts,—two or three miles long, and half a mile or so broad. Some of the bushes are 15 to 20 feet high, and there is plenty of grass.

21. "*October 6th.*—This morning a Kirghiz came riding into camp with a very welcome dák. He had followed my tracks all round from the Aghil Dawan down the Oprang River. He brought two dák, one a special urgent dák. Durand had had a difficulty with the Hunza Rájá, and Colonel Nisbet had at first written to warn me to be careful about entering Kanjút: the second special dák brought the news that things had smoothed down."

22. Turdi Kol at last arrived on October the 10th, and brought with him the supplies, and news that Ján Mohammed Khán had been successful in his treating with the Chinese Ambán at Yárkand. My having sent him there proved to

And of Turdi Kol  
with supplies.

have been a fortunate circumstance, as otherwise I should have now been without my supplies, for exaggerated reports had reached the Ambán, and he had forbidden supplies being sent for me from Yárkand territory. When, however, he received my presents, and a true statement of what had occurred from Ján Mohammed Khán, he became very civil, sent me his salaams with his card, and ordered the supplies to be delivered to me.

23. Taking Turdi Kol with me, I set off again up the Oprang River towards the Shimshál Pass to try to enter Hunza. We were now approaching the country which the Kirghiz have always so much dreaded, and all were anxious to know what sort of reception we should meet with at the "Darwáza," or outpost, which was said to be situated a day's march on the northern side of the Shimshál Pass. On September 13th we arrived close to it, and our further adventures will be best described by again extracting from my journal.

24. "*October 14th.*—An eventful day, and at last, after seeing no one outside our party for forty-one days, we have come across inhabitants, and entered Kanjút territory. Sáríkol, my Kirghiz guide, had told me that we should arrive at the "gate" of Kanjút to-day, so I started on ahead with my escort. After a time we saw a tower on the top of a cliff, and, as we came closer, saw that the whole line of the cliff, where it was accessible, was covered by a loopholed wall, at the upper end of which was a second tower. The cliff was the bank of a deep ravine, which the road crossed, and then zig-zagged up the cliff to the tower, where there was a wooden gate. This was the den of the Kanjúti robbers who have for so many years raided on the countries round, and from which, only last year, they had attacked the Kirghiz and carried off twenty-one captives. I had no idea what sort of reception I should meet with in trying to penetrate the very inmost haunts of these mountain robbers, so I now proceeded cautiously. I made five Gurkhas line the opposite bank of the ravine, while I went on ahead with one Gurkha, my orderly, Shahzad Mir, and Ramzán, the

interpreter. I thought that, if I took my whole party on at once, it might frighten the Kanjútis if they wanted to be friendly, while if they wanted to be hostile the Gurkhas were much better situated for covering my retreat on the top of the cliff, than they would be with me trying to cross the ravine.

25. " I had descended one side of the ravine, crossed the frozen stream at the bottom, and was ascending the zig-zag up to the tower; the door was open and I thought we were going to have a peaceable entry, when suddenly there came loud shouts from above, the door was shut, and men appeared along the wall and on the tower, gesticulating wildly, and pointing their matchlocks at us. It was not a pleasant situation, as we were close under the wall, and the path to the gate led along parallel to it. I halted, and made all sorts of signs, beckoning to them to send a man down to us, holding up one finger, and shouting 'bi adam, bi adam!' (the Turki for one man). The shouting on both sides continued for some time, and all the time I was afraid they would fire off their guns at us. But eventually the door opened, two men came down to us, and we had a long parley, which lasted for more than an hour. They said that the Rájá had sent them notice that a Sahib was coming this way, and that at Shimshál, the nearest village, three marches distant, there was a Mihram-bashee, who had been sent to look after me, but they said the Rájá had given them no orders whether to let me through or not. So they would send off to Shimshál for orders. and said that meanwhile I had better wait where I was.' I replied that my supplies were running short, and therefore I would prefer going on, but that, if they had received no orders from the Rájá to let me through, I was perfectly willing to stay where I was and await his instructions. Experience has shown me that it does not do to appear to be in a hurry on these occasions, and that the best plan is to assume an air of perfect indifference. It answered at any rate in this case, for when the message was taken to the head-man, who remained all this time in the tower, the answer came back that a messenger

had been instantly despatched to Shimshál with the news of my arrival, and that I might proceed there too. I had first, however, to state exactly how many men and how many soldiers I had with me, and when I had told them, one man went off to see if my account was true. I was then allowed to pass through the gate. But, just as I was entering it, a man sprung across the gateway and seized the bridle of my pony. A double row of Kanjútis with matchlocks stood behind him, and I thought for the moment there was treachery. But the man sprang aside again with a laugh, and seeing it was intended for a joke I laughed too. It might have cost the gentleman dear though, if he had kept it up a moment longer, for he would certainly have had a bullet through his head from my Gurkhas, who were just behind me, if not from my revolver.

26. "It was very cold and the Kanjútis lit a large fire, <sup>Difficulty about the</sup> round which we all stood—Kanjútis, Kirghiz, Gurkhas, Ladákhis, a Bálti, a Pathán, and one Englishman, in the heart of the Himalayas, where no European had ever before penetrated. We now had another long parley. They wanted to know the names of the Kirghiz, and how many had been left behind, for they said that all the Kirghiz must go on with me to the Rájá. Turdi Kol was with me, but I was not going to let them know who he was, so called him Sattiwáli, and they said that was just the man the Rájá wanted to see. He was particularly anxious, they said, to see Turdi Kol and Sattiwáli. The Kanjútis wanted to get hold of Turdi Kol in the raid last year, and very nearly did so; but he shot one of them, so I suspected the Rájá could not want him for any friendly purpose. I therefore told the Kanjútis that Turdi Kol (*alias* Sattiwali) had come with camels which had been left some miles back, and was not going to accompany me any further. They protested loudly that all the Kirghiz must go on with me to the Rájá. I said that only one was going on. They said they would have their heads cut off if they allowed any Kirghiz to go back. I said I was very sorry for them, but that certainly not more than one Kirghiz should go with me. But they still kept on

saying that all the Kirghiz must go; however, as I was now on the right side of the gate, with my little Gurkhas round me, instead of being on the side of the cliff with the Kanjútis matchlocks pointed at me, I took up a firm tone, and told them that I was on no account going to take on the other Kirghiz, and, moreover, if they continued to make this fuss, I would go back, and would write to the Rájá to tell him how badly they had treated me. Of course I would never have carried out my threat of going back, but as they had told me the Rájá had given orders that I should be received well at Shimshál, and I could see how much they feared him, I thought it was a pretty safe way of putting the pressure on them. It had instant effect, for they at once agreed to let the other Kirghiz remain with the camels, and said I must not be angry. I then warned them that they must not interfere with the Kirghiz in any way, for if they did I should at once inform the Rájá.

27. "Turdi Kol and Ali Mohammed then went back. As he left, Turdi Kol salaamed to me, and, in an unguarded moment, I said 'Salaam Turdi Kol' instead of 'Salaam Sattiwáli.' Fortunately the Kanjútis were squabbling amongst themselves, and did not notice it, and Shahzad Mir instantly covered my mistake by shouting in a loud tone to our remaining Kirghiz, Sari Kol, which name somewhat resembles Turdi Kol. The Kanjútis now asked if anyone else was coming behind us, for they said no one else would be allowed to pass, and if any one appeared he would have his head cut off. They talk in quite an airy way of cutting people's heads off, and always illustrate the action. But, on the whole, I don't think they are a bad lot of fellows. They are very hardy and determined-looking, but have not a bad expression, and we became quite friendly eventually, especially when my Gurkhas gave them some tobacco. Seven of them have come on with me to help me over the pass, and when I gave them each a seer of atta this evening they were immensely pleased, and thought it enough for several days! I pretend all the time that I am going straight through to Hunza, and say

nothing about my coming back (as is my real intention as soon as I have crossed the pass), as they might see my object and would probably stop me. They give me very bad accounts of the road beyond Shimshál, so I shall take that as an excuse, and tell them that I cannot go by such a bad road, but will go back round by the Tágh-dúm-básh Pámir.

28. "*October 15th.*—At last I have scored a success, for to-day we crossed the Shimshál Pass, over the main range. It is a very easy pass, and low (only 14,700 feet), crossing the range at a remarkable depression. The great Mústágh Mountains, which up to this point are so rugged and lofty, suddenly break down, and the Shimshál Pass is an almost level Pámir, while beyond it, to the north, the mountain summits, though still very lofty, are smooth and round, and look as if they had been smothered in a thick coating of snow. We encamped at a place called Shorshma-ághil, where there are a dozen stone huts (now unoccupied) on the bank of a stream issuing from some glaciers a mile above the hamlet.

29. "*October 16th.*—I halted my party to-day, while I went on some distance down the valley. As the exploration of the road on the south-western side of the main range is not part of my work, and I have further explorations to carry out, I had to invent some excuse for going back. The Kanjútis had been telling me that the road ahead was very bad, so I said that I would go on a short distance and see it, and if it was too bad for my ponies I would go back. I descended the valley for about 8 miles, nearly to its junction with the Shimshál River, and in this portion the road was very fair, as the hill slopes were gentle; but further on I could see the mountains became much more precipitous, and we passed one place which would have been impracticable for laden ponies, so I told the Kanjútis that it was of no use going any further on such a road, and that I would go back round by the Tágh-dúm-básh Pámir.

30. " Just then we met the Mihram-báshee, a man called Sultán Beg, who had been sent by the Rájá to look after me. He was a tall, fine man, and spoke Persian and Turki. He had fifteen men with him, and said he wished to be of every assistance to me. I told him of my decision to go back round by the Tágh-dúm-básh Pámir, and he said I could do whatever I liked. This was rather a relief to me, as I was afraid he might try to make me come on by this route, and put obstacles in the way of my going back. He brought with him a letter from Safder Ali Khán, the Rájá, offering me every assistance, so that Durand has evidently got round him properly. I took Sultán Beg back with me to camp, and Shahzad Mir tells me that he says the Kanjútis are now dependents of England and no longer of China, and that, as the Kirghiz are also friends of the English, the Kanjútis will not harm them any more and will be friendly to them. This is all very satisfactory if it is genuine and lasting.

31. " The following morning I wrote a letter to the Rájá, Safder Ali Khán, thanking him for his reception of me, and saying that, as I had ponies with me, and heard the country ahead was unfit for the passage of animals, I intended to go round by the Tágh-dúm-básh Pámir, and would enter his country from that direction about a month later. I also told the Mihram-báshee that he might take his leave, and I gave him a present of a fine choga, turban, and shawl for the Rájá, and a smaller present for himself. After dismissing him I set out again and returned over the Shimshál Pass.

32. " *October 18th.*—I again passed through the outpost and rejoined Turdi Kol. This time the commander of the outpost was most affable, and came some way out to meet me. I took three Kanjútis on with me, as far as this camp, to show Turdi Kol that they are now my humble servants, and he is now completely satisfied; and he and the other Kirghiz were in a great state of delight when they heard that the Kanjútis are now subject to us, and that the Khán had said that,

A letter of welcome  
from the Rájá.

Return over the  
Shimshál Pass.

Satisfaction of the  
Kirghiz at our man-  
agement of the Kan-  
jútis.

as the Kirghiz were friends of the English, no more raids would be made upon them. Seeing how we have got round his great enemies the Kanjútis, who have for so many years terrified the Kirghiz, Turdi Kol has now a great idea of the English, and says that their arrangements are straight, and good, and firm, while the Chinese never would do anything.

33. "A Kanjúti called Murád, who has been with us for the last few days, became confidential to Ramzán, and told him that the rule of the present Rájá is most oppressive; everything down to their clothes is taxed, and, when the tax collectors come, if a man does not give up a large proportion of his sheep and goats, the produce of his fields, and some of his clothes, he is put in a stream of icy water and kept there till he does. Murád also said that the last Rájá sent an expedition of two hundred men up the glacier at the head of the valley (the road to the Shimshál Pass leads up a side valley) to find a route to Báltistán, but twenty men lost their lives in crevasses on the glacier, and the expedition had to return. Murád also said that the Shimshál Pass was the only one about here, and this, judging from the look of the mountains, I should think was true; at any rate I have not been able to discover any other route, or to hear of any other. Murád is a gentleman who thinks it advisable to worship the rising sun, and told Ramzán that, if I said a good word for him to the Rájá, he would be given a small post for looking after me well. He has twice been on raids to Sháhidúla, but says the Rájá gives the order for the raids, and the men have to go, whether they like it or not. All the stolen property goes to the Rájá, and, if a man hides any, he has his head cut off! This is what the Kirghiz also told me, and I fancy is true."

34. On the next day the Kanjútis returned to their out-  
Return to Chong Jangal. post, and we marched down the Oprang River and reached Chong Jangal on October 20th. Here we found Ján Mohammed Khán had just arrived with a dák. He described to me his interviews with the Chinese Ambán at Yárkand, and said that at first very exaggerated rumours had reached him about my

doings at Sháhídúla, but that, when he told him the true facts, the Ambán was quite satisfied, and that it was a very good thing to protect the road against the Kanjútis. He sent me his salaams and card, and gave orders that the supplies which the frontier authorities had stopped should be sent to me. All this was very satisfactory, for, if I had not sent Ján Mohammed Khán to Yárkand, I might now have been without my second instalment of supplies. As, therefore, everything had gone well, and winter was coming on, I made no stay at Chong Jangal, but immediately set out for the exploration of the other routes which lead into Hunza, by the passes from the Tágh-dúm-básh Pámir, and the results of this will be detailed in the following chapter.

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## CHAPTER IV.

## THE TÁGH-DÚM-BÁSH PÁMIR AND PASSES INTO KANJÚT.

1. News of Captain Grombtchevsky—2. March down the Yárkand River—Signs of former cultivation—3. Pony transport knocked up—4. A letter from Captain Grombtchevsky—5. Meeting with him—6. Description of him—7. Object of his present expedition—8. His Cossack escort—9. His opinion as to a Russian invasion of India—10. His opinion of frontier politics—11. Mahomedan fanaticism in Turkestan—12. His visit to Kanjút—13. The expedition to Tibet—14. Russian ignorance of our frontier—15. Belief in the disloyalty of the natives of India—16. Grombtchevsky's approval of the Gurkha escort—17. A parting compliment to him—18. Arrival on the Tágh-dúm-básh Pámir—19. Meeting with Major Cumberland and Lieutenant Bower—20. Friendly character of the Sarikolis—21. Description of the Tágh-dúm-básh Pámir—22. The Kirghiz inhabitants—23. A friendly reception—24. Exploration of the Khunjeráb Pass—25. A curious phenomenon—26. Oves Poli—27. The Baiyik Pass—28. Arrival of two officials from Kashgar—29. A difficulty settled—30. Rude treatment from the Kirghiz—31. Departure of Turdi Kol—his good services—32. Cross the Mintaka Pass and arrive in Kanjút.

1. Akal Ján, a Kirghiz who belonged to the Tágh-dúm-básh Pámir, but whom I had met at Sháh-hidúla, while we were exploring the passes, had gone to his home on the Pámir, and collected camels and yaks, which he now of his own accord brought to Chong Jangal. He was also the bearer of a letter from Lieutenant Bower, who, with Major Cumberland, had made his way on to the Tágh-dúm-básh Pámir, by way of Sháh-hidúla, Kugiar, and Sarikol. In this letter was the information that Captain Grombtchevsky, the well-known Russian traveller, who had on the previous year found his way into Hunza, was now travelling towards Ladákh, and would probably meet me on the way. Being anxious to see Lieutenant Bower, I despatched an urgent message to him to try and meet me at Táshkurgán, and set out from Chong Jangal on October 21st, descending the Yárkand River towards the Tágh-dúm-básh Pámir.

2. At Chong Jangal there are many signs of former habitation, and, on the next day's march down the valley of the Yárkand River, I saw many other signs of cultivation, and was told by the Kirghiz that, down to about forty years ago, this

March down the Yárkand River—former cultivation.

valley was well populated, and that even now Kirghiz from the Tágh-dúm-básh occasionally cultivate some of the ground in the side valleys, where they are well hidden in case of Kanjúti raids. Trees, too, are here met with, and in the Uruk Valley there are still a few apricot trees.

3. The ponies had now become completely knocked up, and although the road here is good, even the unladen animals could not keep up with the loaded camels. The camels and yaks which Akal Ján had brought were sufficient to carry the whole of our baggage, so I discharged the ponies and sent them back to Ladákh. Working at high altitudes among these mountains, where the road is always difficult, and grass at the camping-grounds very scarce, it is impossible to keep ponies going almost continuously, as I had been obliged to do, and in future explorations of a similar kind, it would be advisable, if possible, to arrange for changes of transport.

4. At the camping-ground near the junction of the Ilisu with the Yárkand River, I received a letter from Captain Grombtchevsky, written in Túrki, and saying that he had halted at Khaian-aksai and was anxious to meet me. I answered, in Persian and English, that I was very glad to have the opportunity of meeting so distinguished a traveller, and would arrange to encamp with him the next day.

5. On October 23rd I marched to Khaian-aksai, and was greeted there in a very cordial manner by a fine, handsome man, who introduced himself as Captain Grombtchevsky. He was about 36 years of age, tall and well-built and dressed in uniform, which he afterwards told me he invariably wore; he had a pleasant, genial manner, and, though our objects were probably rather inimical to one another, it was a great pleasure to again meet a European. He was accompanied by a German naturalist named Conrad, whom he had met in Turkestán on his way to the Pámirs. We spoke together in French, and Captain Grombtchevsky informed me he wished to proceed to Ladákh, and would be very much obliged if I would forward a letter

from him to the Resident in Kashmir, asking for permission for him to do so. This I agreed to do, though, at the same time, I warned him that there were very strict rules against even English officers travelling on that frontier. He then asked me in to dinner, which was a very substantial meal, and washed down by many glasses of vodka. We subsequently spent a very pleasant evening together, sitting round a huge camp fire, and listening to the singing of his cheery Cossack escort. Then, as Captain Grombtchevsky talked very openly and unreservedly upon subjects in which, as an English officer, I would naturally be interested, I determined to halt for a day to see more of him and his men.

6. Captain Grombtchevsky at present holds the appointment of Assistant Governor of Ferghana.

*A description of him.* He told me that he was formerly in the Imperial Guards, and was General Skobelev's Adjutant during the Khokand campaign, at the conclusion of which he was appointed "Chef de District" at Margilán. He is a Pole by birth, and his father died in exile in Siberia. Unlike other Russian officers whom I have met in Eastern Siberia, Captain Grombtchevsky is a thorough gentleman, with an open genial manner, to which one takes immediately, and which undoubtedly has also a very good effect upon the natives. He strikes one, in fact, as being the typical kind of man for the work he is engaged upon, and had he more money at his command would undoubtedly be a very successful explorer. He is, I have heard, considered by the Russian Geographical Society to be their rising explorer, and his journey into Hunza, in 1888, showed him to be possessed of plenty of boldness and daring. He enjoys the confidence of the Czar himself, and from his own accounts looks upon success in his travels as being the only way now-a-days to promotion, as the Russian Government are well known for the liberal manner in which they reward their frontier officers and explorers, if successful; so that, as he is stationed in a part of Túrkeistán where the Russian frontier nearest approaches to ours, it is very probable that we may hear more of Captain Grombtchevsky on our border-lands.

7. On the present occasion he had some difficulty in obtaining the permission of his Government to undertake this expedition, for the Minister for War and the Head of the Asiatic Department were unwilling to risk the chance of complications with our Government, but Captain Grombtchevsky finally obtained permission through the personal influence of the Czarewitch. His expenses are paid by the Geographical Society, who gave him 5,000 roubles (about 6,200 rupees), while Government gave the services of six Cossacks and one non-commissioned officer. His object was to penetrate to Kafirstán and reach Peshawar, if possible, and he says he had made arrangements by which he might at one time have reached the borders of Kafirstán without being stopped by the Afgháns; but he was delayed a month in Turkestán, and in the meanwhile Afghán troops had begun to move towards Shignán and Roshán, and his way was blocked. He wrote three times for permission to pass through Badakshán, but the Amir refused to grant it. He therefore determined to try his alternative programme, which was to pass along the north slopes of the Mústágh Mountains, get down to Leh, if possible, and from there enter Tibet. Some reports also said that he wished to have gone down through Hunza again to Gilgit, but was deterred by the news of Colonel Durand's appointment to that place. After leaving Russian Turkestán he had passed through Darwáz, the Alichur Pámir, and the Great and Little Pámirs, on to the Tágh-dúm-básh Pámir; from there he hoped to reach Sháhidúla (he has since done so), cross the Kárákoram Pass into Ladákh, and then go by Mr. Carey's route *via* Tankse and the Mangtse Lake to Polu.

8. Captain Grombtchvesky's party consisted of seven Cossacks, a munshi who had accompanied him to Hunza on the previous year, and one servant. He lived in a small light tent of umbrella-like construction; Herr Conrad, the naturalist, lived in another; the Cossacks lived in a very flimsy *tent d'abri*, with both ends open, which must have been an uncomfortable arrangement when the bitter winds of these high-lands were in full

force; and the servants lived in a fourth tent. Such was their little camp. The Cossacks appeared to do all the work; they scoured the mountain-sides for the ponies in the morning, fed them, and saddled and loaded them for the march; they formed a guard during the march, and at night Captain Grombtchevsky always had a sentry over his tent. For all this work they appeared to be very badly looked after. Their wretched apology for a tent has already been described; their food seemed poor and inefficient, as they lived almost entirely on mutton, and ate even the entrails of the sheep, and seldom had any flour, as there were only 80 lb in camp for the whole party for three months, and their pay was ridiculously small. The liberality of our Government, indeed, was very apparent on this occasion, for the contrast between the parties was remarkable. The Gurkhas had two snug little sowars' pāls, with waterproof sheets and numdahs and everything that could be done to make them comfortable, and, as I had been given a liberal allowance of money for the expenses of the expedition, my men had as much and even more than they wanted of mutton, flour, rice, tea, and sugar, although we had then been travelling for 71 days from the last village where supplies were obtainable, and all we had with us had to be brought from Chinese territory, where the rulers, considering that the object of my mission was (though unavoidably on our part) calculated to cause them annoyance, might well have stopped our supplies; whereas, on the other hand, the Russians had been travelling within easy reach of their frontier, and had been halted for some time on the Pámirs, where their Consul at Kashgar might, without any difficulty, have sent them as many supplies as they could possibly want. But, although the Cossacks struck both me and my men as being very badly looked after, they were good, sound, hardy fellows, who looked well able to stand the rough work they had to do. They were small but thick-set men, averaging about 5 feet 6 inches in height, fair in complexion, looking thoroughly European in appearance, and resembling very much our English country labourers. They were very dirty and were clothed in khaki jackets, tight

pantaloons, and high boots reaching above the knee; over this they wore a long brown great-coat, and at night a heavy poshtin reaching to the ankles. Their arms consisted of a rifle and sword. On the whole, the term "rough and ready" would summarise the general impressions left upon me by them.<sup>1</sup>

9. Captain Grombtchevsky expressed his opinions freely on many subjects. He was most emphatic in his hatred of the Germans, and in his opinion that the Russians would one day invade India. Although his two companions were one a German and the other an Englishman, whom he frankly declared were the two nationalities most at enmity with the Russians, he said that there were a thousand reasons for the hostility of his countrymen towards the Germans, but only one for enmity towards us, and that was that we would persist in meddling and interfering in the Balkan peninsula and trying to thwart what he considered the legitimate progress of Russia in that direction. He said that every officer and man in the Russian army wished to march on India, but, when they did come, it would not be with a small army, but with three or four hundred thousand men, and on my suggesting that there might be difficulty about supplies and transport for so large a force, he said that the Russian soldier went wherever he was ordered to go and did not think about such things; he looked upon the general of an army as his father, who would provide all that was possible, and if at the end of a hard day's march he found neither water to drink nor food to eat, he would still not complain, but would go on cheerfully till he died, and when he died there were many more in Russia to take his place. Grombtchevsky quoted many instances from the Central Asian campaigns to illustrate this statement, and it is undoubtedly true that the Russian soldier is brave, enduring, cheerful, and uncomplaining, but it is equally true that Russian generals and their staffs have a very meagre idea of the art

<sup>1</sup> For description of the Cossacks seen by the Afghan Boundary Commission, see the "Memorandum on the Russian Escort" by Captain Drummond, Intelligence Branch.

of making arrangements of any kind, and that the knowledge that there are always plenty of men behind has caused them to be so negligent that many a Russian soldier's life has been sacrificed through want of necessary arrangements.

10. With regard to our Indian frontier, Captain Grombtchevsky thought our system of subsidising all the neighbouring states must be very unsatisfactory, and that our safest plan would be to annex the whole of the country up to the Hindu Kush Mountains. The Russians would then do the same on the north, and we should have that range as a frontier between our respective empires. As to the Amir of Kabul, he did not believe for a moment that he was a real friend of ours. He said that Abdúl Rahmán had lived for many years in Russian Turkestán and was far more friendly disposed towards the nation who supplied him with money and arms with which to enter Afghanistán, than to the nation who now propped him up on the throne. Bokhara was now a Russian district, and this was the prize which would be offered to Abdúl Rahmán if he would throw in his lot with the Russians in the case of a war. As to subsidising generally, and paying large pensions to men like Yakúb Khán, he said that it was too expensive for the Russians, and the plan they were adopting in Khiva was to let the Khán rule on for the present, and then at his death, when there will be the usual scramble for his throne, the Russian will step in and annex the country, and in this way he said they would save paying a large pension to the Khán and his family indefinitely.

11. Speaking of the Mahomedan population of Russian Turkestán, he said that they were extremely fanatical, and that in 1878, when 20,000 Russian troops were set in motion towards the frontiers of Afghanistán, only 1,000 remained at one time to keep the Mahomedan population in check. On that occasion Captain Grombtchevsky was in charge of the Margilán district, without any troops whatever to uphold his authority, and he told me that the town was posted with placards calling upon the inhabitants to rise against the

His opinion on frontier politics.

Mahomedan fanaticism in Turkestán.

Russians, but he was able to avert a crisis by riding boldly through the town.

12. Referring to his visit to Kanjút last year, Captain Grombtchevsky's visit to Kanjút. Grombtchevsky said that he had repeatedly written to the Rájá to say that he had no political mission whatever. On his arrival at Hunza the Rájá intimated that he would receive him in full durbar, but on Grombtchevsky's mentioning that he intended to ride up with his Cossacks, the Kanjúti officials raised objections. The Russian, however, said that, if he could not ride, he would not go at all; and as the Rájá had already arrived in durbar, and given out that an ambassador from the Great White Czar was coming to treat with him, the Kanjútis had to give in, and, although it was only a few hundred yards distant, Grombtchevsky rode up to the durbar with his escort. The Kanjútis, however, appear to have turned the tables on him afterwards, for they begged for everything of value he had, and he was obliged to part with seven rifles, a number of revolvers, and six ponies, besides many other lesser articles. His opinion of Safder Ali Khán was that he was perfectly untrustworthy, and, as a proof of this, he showed me two letters written by the Rájá to Grombtchevsky, even after Colonel Durand's visit. On his return to St. Petersburg, after his journey to Kanjút, he received the honour of a special audience of the Czar, and was given a gold medal by the Geographical Society. His munshi (the same one who is now with him) received a gold medal from the Czar, which he was wearing when we saw him; and his Cossacks all received promotion.

13. Both before his present journey and his last one, The Russian expedition to Tibet. Captain Grombtchevsky had audiences of the Czar, at which he pointed out before all the Head-Quarter staff the route he was going to follow and the objects of his journey. At his interview before starting on his journey to Hunza, he says that General Prejevalsky, the great Central Asian explorer, was also present. He was at a large table with all the maps of Tibet laid out before him; a door opened, and the Czar and Czarewitch, with all the Head-Quar-

ter staff, came into the room, and began discussing Prejevalsky's plans. The Czar said he had only seen one human being who had ever seen the great Lama of Tibet, and Prejevalsky, saluting the Czar, replied "Your Majesty, I will go to Lhasa and bring him back, that you may see him with your own eyes." Prejevalsky died when he was just starting for Tibet, and Grombtchevsky says that Colonel Pievtsof is by no means a worthy successor, as he has been for some years in an office on the Head-Quarter staff, and has not sufficient enterprise or resolution for such an undertaking. Colonel Pievtsof has 120,000 roubles (£1,50,000) for the expenses of the expedition, a guard of 25 men, and a machine gun, and is to be away about three years. But other information from Russian sources says that he is not to go to Lhasa, as had been first intended, but will only explore the northern part of Tibet as far as the Prejevalsky Mountains, and then return to Lob Nor. Grombtchevsky had a great admiration for Prejevalsky, and spoke of the rapid promotion he had obtained on account of his journeys. He said that now, when there was no war, officers had no chance of promotion, unless they did something unusual, such as exploration.

14. He admired English explorers very much, and said they went everywhere, but that our Gov-  
<sup>Russian ignorance of our frontier.</sup> ernment kept everything so secret that the Russians never knew where they had been, so that until he actually arrived in Kanjút, he had not known that Colonel Lockhart's Mission had been there, and had thought that he was the first European to cross the Hindu Kush into that country. "And now again," he said, "I thought that no Englishman had explored right along the northern slopes of the Mústágh Mountains, but the very first thing, on commencing my explorations, I meet an Englishman who has just completed it all." I was surprised indeed to find how little he really knew about our frontier. He had, it is true, some of our confidential reports, but they were very old, and, considering the changes that have taken place during the last few years, utterly useless for any practical purpose; and from the way he talked it was evident that he had little

idea of the state of the countries on our frontier. Speaking of Ladákh, for instance, he said he was looking forward to seeing the magnificent forest-clad mountains round Leh—this of a country where not a single tree is to be seen on the mountain-sides!

15. Like all Russians, too, Captain Grombtchevsky took it as a matter of course that the natives of India were thoroughly disloyal, and on the first appearance of the Russians would rise against us. Could he have heard the contemptuous way in which my Gurkhas and the Pathán orderly spoke of the Cossacks, and the way they were treated in comparison with themselves, he would, however, have formed a different opinion of the loyalty of our native soldiers at any rate. I was, indeed, myself rather surprised at seeing how thoroughly the escort appreciated how far better off they were than the Cossacks, and at the air of superiority they adopted towards them, as if they thought such dirty, badly paid, badly fed, and badly equipped men were very inferior to themselves. The Pathán orderly, too, who had been with the Boundary Commission, was never tired of holding forth upon the respective advantages enjoyed by the native soldier and the Cossack; and though my experience is not very great, yet the more I hear and see, the more I am convinced that, taik as people may about the way Russians "fraternise," as they call it, with subject races, our system is at least as good as the Russian; and though we are not in the habit of making Alikhanoffs and shaking hands with every other man we meet, yet when our soldiers come in contact with the Russians, as they have done lately on the Afghan Boundary Commission and the present Mission, they thoroughly appreciate the solid benefits of our system of paying, feeding, and equipping them well, and on returning to their regiments tell their comrades of it.

16. An amusing incident, about the Gurkhas, may be worth relating. Captain Grombtchevsky had asked me to let him inspect my Gurkhas and their equipment. I readily

Russian belief in the disloyalty of the natives of India.

Grombtchevsky's approval of the Gurkha escort.

complied, and had my six little Gurkhas paraded in marching order. Grombtchevsky looked at them for a short time in silence, and then made some remark to me; this the havildar immediately thought must be a comment upon their small stature, so before I could answer the Russian, he said to me—"The Russ may think us small, but tell him, Sahib, that we are the shortest men in the regiment, and that in Nepal there are plenty of Gurkhas far bigger than he is." This to a man well over six feet high and proportionately big! Grombtchevsky was, however, very much struck with the Gurkhas, and when he saw the smart way in which they drilled he said that they were evidently not irregular soldiers like his Cossacks, but thoroughly trained regulars.

17. Before we parted, Captain Grombtchevsky took a photograph of our combined parties, in which there were fourteen different nationalities represented. After this, when the baggage had started, I made the Gurkha escort march up to the Russian and salute him by presenting arms. He was very much pleased at this compliment, and then he also formed up his escort to salute me, and we afterwards took leave of each other with every assurance of friendship, and with hopes that we should meet again.

18. On the following day, 26th October, we crossed the Kúrbú Pass on to the Tàgh-dúm-básh Pámir. The pass is an easy one, 14,700 feet high, and is quite practicable for laden animals. The change of scenery now was very striking; in place of the deep ravines and precipitous mountain-sides that we had hitherto been accustomed to in the valleys of the Yárkand and Oprang Rivers, we now found great, open, almost level plains, some 4 or 5 miles broad, running down between ranges of mountains only a few thousand feet higher than the valleys. Grass, too, was plentiful, and there was no need for laboriously seeking good tracks for the ponies, as on the Pámir you could go anywhere. But the wind was bitterly cold, and although the temperature at night did not usually descend below zero (Fahrenheit), yet it was very much more

trying than the still cold which we had been experiencing lately in the Yárkand River. There indeed the thermometer was quite as low as on the Pámir, but the air was generally still, and there was no wind to drive the cold right into the marrow of one's bones.

Our first encampment was at a place called Ilisu, where one of the felt tents of the Kirghiz had been prepared for me, and where the head-man of the Pámir, Kuch Mohammed Beg by name, had arrived to meet me. He was not very prepossessing in appearance, and had a bad reputation for giving the Kanjúti Rájá information to enable him to carry out his raids successfully, but he was friendly enough to me and gave me all the assistance which I required. And this was a satisfactory thing, for he was really under the Chinese and might have made difficulties here, as I had with me no Chinese passport, and had to trust to establishing friendly relations with the inhabitants to enable me to get through the country without hindrance.

19. The next day I left my escort, and set out to meet Major Cumberland and Lieutenant Bower near Táshkúrgán, some 70 miles distant. This place I reached on the following day, and found them encamped a few miles lower down. The pleasure of meeting Englishmen again, and being able to talk in my own language, may well be imagined. They had set out from Leh about two weeks before me, and, accompanied by M. Dauvergne, they had travelled by Sháhidúla to the Kilian Pass, and from there had struck westward to Kugiar, near which place they had met with Colonel Pievtsof, the Russian traveller, who had succeeded the late General Prejevalsky in command of the expedition to Tibet. They say that this party had from 80 to 100 camels, besides about 20 ponies. The guard consisted of 25 Cossacks, and they had no native servants whatever, the Cossacks doing the whole of the work. They lived in felt tents and were apparently travelling very leisurely and comfortably. Two other Russians were also said to have gone towards the Yárkand River, but these are unconnected with Colonel Pievtsof's party. From Kugiar,

Major Cumberland had made his way across the Tisnáf Valley, which he describes as being very beautiful and abounding in fruit, to the Yárkand River, and from there up the valley of the Túng River—also a very fruitful one—to Táshkúrgán. This road has never before been traversed by Europeans, and, from Major Cumberland's account, it would appear to be not an easy one, by reason of the succession of passes over the spurs running down from the big ranges which had to be crossed. He says that there is no route practicable for animals down the valley of the Yárkand River to Yárkand, though foot-passengers can find a way. On the Tágh-dúm-básh Pámir Major Cumberland and Lieutenant Bower had shot, between them, 11 oves poli, and M. Dauvergne had here parted with them and gone by Wakhán and the Baroghil Pass to Gilgit. They had also met Captain Grombtchevsky, and had been as much struck as I was with his genial manner, though they had warned him of the difficulties he would be likely to meet in gaining permission to enter Ladákh, accompanied as he was with an escort of Cossacks.

20. The winter had now fairly set in, and as two passes on the main range had still to be explored, it was necessary for me to return quickly to my party. I accordingly had to leave Major Cumberland again on October the 30th, and retrace my steps down the Tágh-dúm-básh Pámir. I have, however, forgotten to mention that in Major Cumberland's camp I was visited by Sir Buland Sháh, a brother of Ali Murdan Sháh, the former Khán of Wakhán. He brought me a small present, and expressed his pleasure at meeting an Englishman. He said that when the Amír of Kábul had conquered Wakhán, he had fled here, and had lived near Táshkúrgán ever since. The Sarikolis seemed very friendly disposed, and as I was passing through Tisnáf, a small walled village a mile or two north of Táshkúrgán, the head-man met me and pressed me to come in to breakfast, a request which I was very glad to accept. He took me to a small house, and brought me bread and tea, which he ate with me, and then, although he

was a Chinese official, he expressed a wish that I would take his people under our protection. I was told that this year many fugitives from Shignán had been driven here by the Afgháns, but most of them had been sent back by the Chinese, after they had received an assurance from the Governor of Shignán that no harm should be done to them. I heard, too, that a man called Nazir Ali, an envoy from the Rájá of Hunza, had just passed through on his way to Yárkand with twelve tilas of gold.

21. Táshkúrgán and its neighbourhood was visited by Colonel Gordon, with some of the members of Forsyth's Yárkand Mission in 1874, on their way to Wakhán and the Great and Little Pámirs, and there is nothing which I need add to the description of it, which will be found in the Report of the Mission. The Tágh-dúm-básh Pámir, of which Táshkúrgán may be said to be the northernmost limit, had not been visited by Colonel Gordon's party, and a short description of it may, therefore, be interesting. This Pámir may be said to commence, one branch at the Khunjeráb Pass and another at the Wakhurjui Pass, and to extend down to Táshkúrgán, where the district of Sarikol begins. The Pámir is inhabited chiefly by Kirghiz, but there are also a few Sarikolis. All of these keep large flocks and herds, but cultivation and houses are not seen beyond Táshkúrgán. The Pámir itself is a broad plain rising very gently on both sides to the mountain ranges by which it is enclosed. It gives one the impression of formerly having been a deep valley between two mountain ranges, which has now been filled up by the débris brought down by former glaciers. On account of the insufficient rainfall this valley has not been washed out and cleared of the débris, and, consequently, is now a plain at a high elevation. The Pámir rises from 10,000 feet at Táshkúrgán to 14,300 feet at the Khunjeráb Pass. It is mostly covered with coarse scrub and gravel, but there are also some fine stretches of good grass. Fuel is very scarce, and the inhabitants generally use dung for their fires.

22. The total number of inhabitants, including women and children, probably does not exceed 300. They are a somewhat rough lot, and mostly bad characters, who have fled, for some reason, from Sháhídúla, the Alai, or the Tagarma Pámir. The head-man, Kuch Mahomed, really belongs to the Kirghiz of Andiján, but has been placed here by the Chinese, and is supposed to be in charge of the frontier in this direction: he, however, is also in the pay of the Rájá of Hunza, and seemed to have a good deal more respect for him than for the Chinese. The next head-man is Akal Ján, and the third a scoundrel called Juma Bai, of whom more later on.

23. On October the 30th I rejoined my escort on the Káráchukur stream, and the following day set out to explore the Khunjeráb Pass. On the way I passed an encampment belonging to a Sarikoli, named Kulaik Bai, who very kindly asked me in to have some refreshment; and as his son, a man named Alif Hajee, had passed through India on his way to Mecca, he could speak a little Hindustani, and it was interesting to talk with him.

24. Heavy clouds had been collecting for the last few days, and during the night, which I spent in a yurt set up for me by Akal Ján, it snowed heavily. Yurts are generally constructed with a large hole some  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet in diameter in the top to allow the smoke from the fire going out. On this occasion, when I woke in the morning, I found the floor of the yurt covered with snow, which, when the fire had gone out, came in from the opening. It was now falling heavily outside, and the whole country was covered with it, so the prospect for the exploration of the pass was not very promising. However, I set out with two good men, leaving the rest of the party behind, and, marching through the snow, reached the summit of the pass at mid-day. The route was perfectly easy, so that we could ride the whole way to the summit. On the other side, however, the road could be seen running down a narrow gorge, and, beyond this, there is a pass over a secondary range, which at this time of the year is impracticable. The

mountains here seemed to be of no great height compared with the mountains to be seen further east. There is another pass called the Oprang Pass, up a side valley, which leads down a valley to the Oprang River at Shor-Bulák, thus forming an alternative route to that by the Kúrbú Pass; this road, however, is said to be very difficult and now out of use.

25. Oves poli are said to abound in this part, and Bower had told me that he had shot six near the  
 A curious phenom-  
 non. Khunjeráb Pass; but to-day it was snowing so heavily that nothing could be seen of them, and I only saw a few wolves, which prey upon these oves poli, and catch the old rams when their horns have become so heavy as to retard their progress. While descending from the pass to the small camp which had been brought to the foot of it, the snow ceased, the wind dropped, the sun came out, and the whole air became glistening with shining particles. This is a very curious phenomenon. I had at first thought that it was the sun shining on minute particles of snow, but I soon found that no snow at all was falling, and I am quite unable to account for these glistening particles. The Kirghiz informed me that it usually occurred after a fall of snow, and was a presage of great cold hereafter. The thermometer indeed went rapidly down, and at 6 o'clock in the evening was 5° below zero Fahrenheit; but then a wind sprang up, which immediately brought the thermometer up to zero, and during the night it never fell below that, though the thermometer of one's senses would have registered it very much below zero.

26. There was now only one more pass to explore, and I hastened back to get round to the Min-  
 Oves poli. taka Pass, for I was beginning to fear that I might perhaps be prevented by the snow from getting across the range into Hunza. Marching down to Akal Ján's camp, I had the good fortune to see a herd of oves poli in the distance; I managed to get fairly close to them, but not near enough for a shot, and by the time I had reached a rock from behind which I had hoped to bag one, I found they had disappeared right up the mountain-side, and were only just

distinguishable through a telescope, looking down disdainfully at me from the top of the highest crag. This stalk after the oves poli showed me how much weaker I had become lately, from being so long at great elevations, and, from having no proper cook, my appetite had also gradually fallen away, and I had become too weak for any great exertions. But fortunately the Tágh-dúm-básh Pámir is so easy that one can ride everywhere.

27. On November the 4th I rejoined the Gurkha escort at Káráchukur, where they had remained while I was exploring the Khunjeráb Pass.

**The Baiyik Pass.**

They had now been halted for ten days, and were glad enough to get on the move again. On the following day we marched up the Káráchukur to Mintaka Aksai, where the stream from the Mintaka Pass joins the Ká:áchukur, which flows from the Wákhurjui Pass, leading over to Wakhán. A road also leads from the valley of the Ká:áchukur by the Baiyik Pass to Aktásh on the Little Pámir. This is practicable for ponies, and was crossed this year by Captain Grombtchevsky; it is an important pass, as leading from the Russian frontier at Tuyuksu to either Hunza or the valley of the Yárkand River.

28. On this march Kuch Mahomed asked me in to breakfast at his camp, which is situated close to the road; and I there found two

**Arrival of two officials from Kashgar.**

Kashgaris who were officials sent by the Chinese Taotai of Kashgar to enquire into affairs on this frontier, and to go to Hunza to ask the Rájá whether he acknowledged our supremacy or that of China. After breakfasting I again set out, but was passed on the road by these two Kashgaris, who arrived at the Mintaka Aksai camp shortly before me. They here found a tent set apart for some one, and, on asking Kuch Mahomed whom it was for, were told that it had been prepared for me. On hearing this they were furious, and demanded why a tent had not been prepared for them also. Kuch Mahomed tried to smooth them down, but he did not offer them the tent, and I was glad on my arrival to find it still kept for me, though, when I heard the circumstances, I was surprised at his having done so, as I was

really on Chinese territory, and these were Chinese officials, while I was simply an English traveller. The Kashgaris were only given a place with the Kirghiz in one of their tents, and, soon after my arrival, I heard that they had summoned a levée of all the Kirghiz in the place, and had warned them to be careful what they were doing; they also got hold of my interpreter, and began questioning him about my doings, and asked for my passport. On hearing this, I sent them a message requesting them not to interfere with my servants, and saying that, if they wanted any information about my doings, I should be perfectly ready to give it them, and that when I had leisure I would send for them, and they might then ask me any questions they wished.

29. Next morning I sent to them to say that I was at leisure, and would give them all the information they wished. They came over to my tent, and after giving them tea and treating them politely, I told them that the Kirghiz at Sháhidúla had applied to us for assistance against Kanjúti raids, and that I had been sent to enquire into their case and to make arrangements for defending the road, and that I was now returning to India by Hunza, and was merely crossing the Tágh-dúm-básh Pámir on my way there. I told them that China and England were friendly with each other, and that, though I had not now a passport, as I had not been aware that I should have to cross a portion of Chinese territory, I had travelled, two years ago, from Peking, the capital of China, with a passport from the Emperor right through to Yárkand and Kashgar. The Kashgari officials, on hearing this, said they were perfectly satisfied; that the Chinese and English were always friends, but that they should like me to put down what I had said in writing, that they might show it to the Taotai at Kashgar. This I readily consented to do, and, after more tea-drinking and polite speeches, we parted in a very friendly manner, and soon after the Kirghiz came in to say that the Kashgari officials had given orders that I was to be given every assistance.

30. This would be my last day amongst the Kirghiz, and it was necessary, therefore, to pay them up, and give them presents for the service they rendered me. I accordingly paid them very liberally for the hire of camels, yaks, etc., and also gave each of the three head-men some presents. They, however, had heard exaggerated reports of the presents which I had given to the Sháhídúla Kirghiz, and expected to receive more than I had given them, and one of them, Juma Bai, was impertinent enough afterwards to send back my present, saying it was insufficient. This naturally made me extremely angry, and sending my interpreter with a sheep, which Juma Bai had given me on the previous day, and with my presents which he had returned, I sent him with them back to the Kirghiz, and told him to throw away the tea and cloth, etc., which I had given him, before his eyes, to turn the sheep loose in the valley, and to express my extreme displeasure at being insulted in this way. Juma Bai happened to be living with the two Kashgaris, and, when they saw all this occur, they turned on him and abused him heartily for insulting a guest like this, and the rest of the Kirghiz, taking the cue from them, set upon the unfortunate Juma and beat him. The other two head-men then came and apologised profusely to me, hoping that I was not displeased with them also, and the next morning, when we parted, they were very friendly and full of expressions of good-will.

31. Here, too, I had to take leave of Turdi Kol and Ján Mohammed Khán; they had served me well, and given me all the assistance in the way of procuring guides and obtaining supplies which I had required from them. I accordingly gave them each a watch and a silver chain, and sent them off very pleased. These two would, I am sure, always do what we wanted, but the Kirghiz are a very independent lot, each man liking to work by himself; and the question is whether Turdi Kol can hold them together, and for this reason it was that he asked that a British representative should be sent to Sháhídúla.

32. On November the 8th we crossed the Mintaka Pass; the ascent for about 1,000 feet is very steep, and, near the top, there was a considerable amount of recently-fallen snow. Snow, indeed, was even now falling on the mountains all round continuously, but during our passage it remained clear, and though the snow was soft and we sank into it up to our knees, yet the yaks carried the baggage over without much real difficulty. The height is 14,400 feet, though the mountains near it must rise to fully 22,000 feet. The descent is also steep, leading down a rocky zig-zag on to the moraine of a glacier, but, after passing over this for about a mile and a half, all difficulties are over, and the route descends a stream to Murkush. Here we met Kanjúti officials sent by the Rájá to await our arrival with twenty coolies to carry my baggage. I therefore despatched the Kirghiz with the yaks which had brought our baggage over the pass. Our doings in Kanjút will be related in the next chapter.

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HUNZA.

1. The road from the Kilik Pass, which was explored by Colonel Lockhart's Mission in 1886, joins in at Murkush, so that we were now on well-known ground; our explorations were over, and the only question left to be solved was whether the Rájá of Hunza would let us through his country without hindrance, or whether he would be as obstructive as his father had been to Colonel Lockhart, and he himself had been to Captain Durand.<sup>2</sup> The camping ground of Murkush is a day's march from Misgah, the nearest village, and on the way there we passed through some very striking scenery, for the mountains rise straight out of the river-bed in sheer precipices of thousands of feet. As we descended the valley it got warmer every step, and, now that we were getting to lower levels, there seemed to be something to breathe, and fresh life gradually came into one.

**Now Colonel Sir W. S. A. Lockhart, K.C B., C.S.I.  
Now Lieutenant-Colonel A. G. Durand**

Accession Number.....

would now be smooth; but the next morning I found that, although they were full of offers of assistance, they were not very ready to do what was wanted when the time came. The Governor had presented me with a sheep and some flour on the previous evening, and he now sent round saying that he wanted payment for these things. I told him that I had understood from the Rájá's letter to me, and from his own assurances, that I was the guest of the Rájá, and that it was not customary for guests to pay for what had been given them as presents, but that, no doubt, when the Governor should take leave of me, I would give him a suitable present. Then came a difficulty about coolies; they had assured me on the previous evening that there would be no difficulty whatever in conveying my baggage down to Hunza, but in the morning it was evident that the Governor had no authority whatever over these wild Kanjútis, and could not get together the proper number of men for the carriage of my baggage. After my tent had been struck and everything had been got ready for starting, I had to sit in my chair for two or three hours while the Governor was fighting with the men to get them to go. At last I told him that I intended to pitch my camp again, and would write to the Rájá to say that I was unable to go any further, as the Governor could not get me the necessary carriage. This frightened the Governor so much that he renewed his efforts, and besought me not to do such a thing as to delay going on to the Rájá, and eventually he produced the requisite number of ponies and men by 12 o'clock.

3. I then set out for Gircha, which I reached in the evening, and found Mohammed Nafiz <sup>Unsatisfactory ar-</sup> <sup>rangements.</sup> Khán, a brother of the Rájá, awaiting me there. My baggage, however, did not appear, and I ordered a fire to be lighted in the field outside the fort. But although Mohammed Nafiz Khán was full of assurances of assistance, and although the Governor was still with me, they could not get the Kanjútis to supply me with any wood for the fire until I had paid for it. I waited on and on through the night, but still no baggage appeared, and I had to sleep in the open by

the fire. At last about 6 o'clock in the morning the baggage arrived, and my orderly said that when it became dark the Kanjútis refused to move, and consequently he had been unable to get the baggage on.

4. When my tent had been pitched, Mahommed Nafiz <sup>Mahommed Nafiz</sup> Khán came to see me. He is an unintelligent, careless youth of about 25, very dirtily and shabbily dressed, and without any self-respect or dignity whatever. In answer to his enquiries whether I was "razi," I replied that I was extremely annoyed at the arrangements which had been made for me, and that I should tell the Rájá so when I should meet him at Hunza. He, of course, was full of apologies and excuses, but I told him that I would not strike my camp on the following day unless all the coolies and ponies necessary were brought before me by 7 o'clock in the morning.

5. Later on a messenger arrived with the news that the <sup>Wazir Dádú and</sup> Wazir Dádú and Mohammed Nazim Khán <sup>Mahommed Nazim</sup> would reach here about mid-day to visit me. I wished to impress upon them that I was put out with the arrangements which had been made, so when they arrived and said they wished to visit me, I told them that I was not at leisure to see them, and would let them know later on when it was convenient to me for them to call on me. In the afternoon I sent a messenger to say that I was ready now to receive them, and they came to me dressed in some gorgeous clothes which had been given them by Colonel Lockhart, and escorted by a dozen soldiers. In answer to their enquiries whether I had reached here comfortably, I replied that though the Rájá evidently meant to be kind to me, I had had considerable trouble in getting along. They replied that the Kanjútis were not accustomed to carrying loads like Báltis, and they said that it would be a good thing if I should write to Gilgit to get some Bálti coolies up to Gulmit, while they would make arrangements for carrying my baggage as far as that place. This seemed reasonable enough, for it was quite evident that the Kanjútis objected very much to carrying loads, and the authorities did

not care to compel them to do so. I therefore sent off a messenger to Gilgit asking for 40 coolies to be sent as quickly as possible to Gulmit. Had I known there was this difficulty about coolies, I would have brought on yaks from the Pámir, but a Kanjúti, who had been sent to the Pámir by the Rájá, had assured me that there would be no difficulty about carriage, and that the Rájá had given orders that my things should be carried through. But this difficulty about transport is valuable in this way, that it showed me very clearly how independent and quarrelsome the Kanjútis are, and how little authority the officials have over them; indeed, it was evident that the Wazir himself, the head official of the kingdom, possessed very little authority, and it was clear that the *hukum*, as the expression goes in India, does not run in these regions.

6. The Wazir is a handsome-looking man, with good features, and wears a very fine beard; he strikes one as being a clever, shrewd man, with plenty of common sense about him; and, from what I saw afterwards, I should think that he has considerable influence with the Rájá. He is a keen sportsman and a good shot. Mahommed Nazim Khán seemed a well-intentioned youth, but without much authority or influence, and, as my orderly observed, it is evident that it was only because of their lack of ability that Mahommed Nazim and Mahommed Nafiz Khán had not hitherto been made away with by the Rájá.

7 The remainder of the way down to Gulmit, where I was to meet the Rájá, was accomplished more comfortably, though I was even now struck with the way that the Wazir and Mohammed Nazim Khán were disobeyed in small ways by the people. As an instance of this, my orderly told me that at one place where I had arrived ahead of the baggage, the Wazir had told the head-man to get some water for my party, but it was some time before both he and the village head-man could get a man to fetch the water without first being paid.

Independent character of the Kanjútis.

8. On the day that I was to arrive at Gulmit, I put on my full-dress uniform, and as I neared the place I was met by a deputation sent by the Rájá to welcome me. When we came in sight of the fort at Gulmit a salute was fired, which the deputation, fearing lest I should think the guns were loaded, considerably informed me was intended for a salute. They fired 13 guns, which they said they had heard was a General's salute. Near the fort was pitched a tent in which the Rájá was to receive me, and as I approached, the most fearful din of tom-toms and various other musical instruments arose, and I proceeded between two long rows of wild-looking Kanjútis, variously armed with matchlocks and swords, to the door of the tent, where I was received by the Rájá. Very fortunately, in view of such a contingency, I had brought with me, ahead of my baggage, a camp chair, for I now found that the Rájá only had one chair, and I had mine brought in and placed beside his. His chair was placed on a gorgeous carpet embroidered with silver, and mine was placed on a fine silk on his right-hand side. Behind the Rájá stood a man with a repeating rifle, ready loaded; and in front of us, on each side of the tent, there were rows of the headmen of the country, in the kneeling position which is the custom here. I left my guard outside the tent and took with me my interpreter only. The Rájá began by asking me whether I had arrived here comfortably, and I replied that, thanks to his kindness in sending the Wazir to meet me, I had come along without any trouble, and was very glad to now have the pleasure of paying my respects to him. I thanked him for his reception of me, and spoke with every politeness, so that our interview ended very satisfactorily, and the Rájá expressed his pleasure at meeting me. I then took leave of him and as I was riding off, I ordered my escort to fire a salute of three volleys, for I find that making a good noise pleases these people very much.

9. A meeting with the Rájá had been arranged for the next day, and although my tent was pitched only 200 yards from his, I made a point of riding there. After a few compliments the

A second interview  
—the Rájá asks my  
reasons for coming.

Rájá said that no one else had ever come into Hunza by the route which I had come by, and he wanted to know for what reason I had done so. I answered that I could not be called the first European who had come by this route, for on my way here I had happened to meet with a Russian gentleman who told me that he had come by this very road last year. I said that my object in coming here was that last year there had been some robberies committed on the Leh-Yárkand road, and I had been sent to Sháhidúla to enquire into the case, and from that place I was now returning by Hunza in order to pay my respects to him and to Captain Durand at Gilgit.

10. He then said that Captain Durand had told him that I should have some business to talk to him about, and that he was to listen to what I said; this, I afterwards heard from Captain Durand, was not a true statement, but I answered the Rájá that Captain Durand had been specially stationed at Gilgit for the purpose of making arrangements with him and other Rájás in the neighbourhood, and that I had no authority to treat with him. I, however, took the opportunity of saying that Captain Grombtchevsky had told me a good deal about his reception here, and I hoped that the Rájá would now understand that in future, if he wished to be friendly with the English, he should not let Russians into his country. He replied that Grombtchevsky had wanted to go to Gilgit, but that he had only allowed him to go as far as Hunza, and had then sent him back; that he was a friend of the English, and however much money Russians might offer him, he would never let them into his country again. I said I was very glad to hear this, and that I took his honourable reception of me as a proof of his friendship for us, and would have much pleasure in informing His Excellency the Viceroy of his friendly feeling.

11. He then came to the real point of the interview, and asked me why the Mehtar of Chitral had been made so great and he had not. I answered that a few years ago Colonel Lockhart had visited both this country and Chitral, and had made the Mehtar

I warn him against having dealings with the Russians.

His jealousy of the Mehtar of Chitral.

great, and that, as since then he had served the British Government well, Captain Durand had this year been sent to make him still greater; but that when Colonel Lockhart visited Hunza, he (Safder Ali Khán) was not then Rájá, so, till this year, we knew nothing of him; and as he had received a Russian last year, we could not, till we had visited him, tell whether he was our friend or the Russians', and therefore, at present, would not make him very great. He then asked that a difference might be made between him and the Nagar Rájá, and that he might be made equal with the Mehtar. † replied that this was Captain Durand's business and had nothing to do with me, but that I hoped that when he had given good proof of his loyalty to the British, his subsidy might be increased in the same way as the Mehtar of Chitral's had been in return for doing us good service.

12. He then asked that he might receive his Kashmir subsidy at Gilgit instead of having to send to Jamú for it. I again told him that all this was Captain Durand's business, and that I could only inform him of his wish, but could say nothing definite myself. He pressed me again, saying it was the one thing he wanted, and evidently believing that I could, if I chose, accede to his request, but I would only repeat my former answer. After this he was rather churlish for a short time, but subsequently recovered his better temper and we parted quite friendly, and he told me that he liked me because I looked him in the face, and he could see through me like glass, that there was nothing behind what I said; and this, indeed, was the case, for I spoke to him decidedly and clearly on matters of business, though making a number of polite speeches when politeness required, as this is evidently the best plan when dealing with these wild people.

13. The two Kashgari officials whom I had met on the Pámir arrived at Gulmit a few days before me, and I was told that when they asked the Rájá why he was letting me in to the country, he said that they had brought me in themselves and had come on in front to show me the way. He

He requests to have his Kashmir subsidy paid at Gilgit.

His bad treatment of two officials sent by the Chinese.

treated them very badly, and took everything they had from them,—their horses, fine clothes, and even their caps,—and sent them away on foot with only one coat each. He was inclined also to loot me in much the same way. I had given him in durbar a good present of a carbine, revolver, Kashmir chogah and shawl, and various other things; but every day he sent down asking me for various little things, and even for my tent, my mule trunks, and some soap for his wives to wash with. He seemed utterly without shame. But I refused all these requests on principle, as the Russian had warned me that if I once gave in they would get everything out of me as they had done out of him.

14. On the following day the Rájá came down on foot to my tent, and at the interview I referred to my visit to Sháhídúla, and spoke of my arrangements with the Kirghiz, and of my having given them money for the repair of the fort to defend themselves and the road against robbers. I said I had heard that these robbers come from Kanjút, but that as the Kirghiz were now friends of the English, and he was also our friend, I hoped that he would arrange to stop these robberies in future. Although I knew that these raids were really planned by the Rájá, I spoke as if they were done without his knowledge, in order not to offend him; but his answers surprised me considerably, for he acknowledged, in the most barefaced way, that he and his ancestors had always made these raids and considered the profits which they gained as part of their revenue, and that, therefore, if we wished him to stop them, we must compensate him accordingly. I answered that if he attempted these raids in the future he might find them more difficult to carry out successfully, and less profitable than in the past; I reminded him that the Kirghiz are now our friends, that the traders on the route were British subjects, and that it was for him to choose whether he would be our friend or not. If he chose to be friendly with us he would no doubt reap the benefits of it as the Mehtar of Chitral had done; if not, then we should be

Third interview—  
the Rájá considers the  
raids a means to ob-  
tain revenue.

his enemies, and he would not find that a good thing in any way.

15. He at once exclaimed profusely that all he wished was to be friendly with us, and referred to

He wishes for an increase of subsidy for letting me through his country.

his good reception of me as a proof. I readily acknowledged this and said I was very pleased with the way he had received

me, and would be careful to inform His Excellency the Viceroy of it ; but he is a changeable man, and apparently thinking my expressions of satisfaction were signs of weakness, said that he would send a man with me to ask Captain Durand for an addition to his subsidy on account of his having received me so well and let me through his country. I told him that he might be quite sure that Captain Durand would do nothing of the sort ; that though he had let me in this year, he had let a Russian in last ; that the Mehtar's subsidy had only been increased after he had served us well for some years ; and that, therefore, he might be certain that the Viceroy would not increase his subsidy any more than had already been done, till His Excellency had seen that he was really friendly with us. This brought him round again and more expressions of friendliness followed.

16. On the previous day he had asked me to make my escort do some parade, so I now showed

Suspicious of my intention in proposing a sham fight.

him the bayonet exercise and then suggested that they should attack a place and show him how we fought. I pointed

out a big rock, some 600 yards distant, and said that the Gurkhas would fire volleys at it and make rushes, firing volleys between each rush and then end up with a bayonet charge on the rock, but that, as he would not be able to see the bayonet charge from a distance, I would tell them to repeat the manœuvre back towards us, of course with blank cartridge. He got very alarmed, however, at such a suggestion, and suspecting treachery of some sort, although I was to sit beside him the whole time, he declined to have such a performance, but suggested that the Gurkhas should fire from where they were at a mark which he would set up. He then stationed a

strong guard round the Gurkhas and another round himself, evidently fearing that the Gurkhas might turn round at any minute and fire upon him; and they put up a mark on a hillside about 900 yards distant, and I gave the order to the Gurkhas to fire volleys at it. As the hillside was of earth, the first volley sent up clouds of dust, at which the Rájá was highly delighted and crowed like a child. We went on firing some time, and I again suggested a sham fight, but he would not hear of such a thing. He had a great respect for Gurkhas and said they were first-rate men for fighting. On his departure I fired three volleys as a salute, as I had done on his arrival, and he went away very well pleased.

17. Money and coolies having arrived from Gilgit, I left Gulmit on November the 23rd, and on the morning of my departure the Rájá came down to my tent on foot and was full of expressions of friendliness. We reached Báltit the next day, and from there crossed into Nağar territory, very thankful to have seen the last of the Hunza people. But for Captain Durand's good arrangements, and his having thoroughly impressed upon the Rájá the necessity of seeing me through safely, it is very doubtful whether I should have got through the country at all, for the Rájá is perfectly untrustworthy, and on account of his ignorance of our real strength and his constant success against Kashmiri troops and in raids on the Yárkand road, he is overweeningly conceited, so that I cannot help thinking that force, in some shape or other, will have to be eventually applied before we get him really satisfactorily in hand. Rupees and patience may do it, but the impression left upon me was that he is too childishy obstinate and wanting in shrewdness and farsightedness to appreciate sufficiently the benefit of keeping on good terms with us.

18. The position of Hunza, which renders a flank attack on the line of communication between Kashmir and Chitral *via* Gilgit possible, makes it very essential that we should have the Rájá of the country thoroughly on our side, so as to prevent any possi-

bility of his admitting Russians into his country. As has been pointed out by Colonel Lockhart, it would be extremely difficult and well nigh impossible for a hostile force to *fight* its way down the valley of the Hunza River, for the only road possible frequently passes along the face of precipitous cliffs. The chief thing to be guarded against, therefore, is the possibility of the Rájá being tampered with and admitting a force instead of opposing it. Safder Ali Khán has nothing to lose by being friendly with us. We have offered him our friendship and settled a subsidy on him, and he has accepted it and agreed to our terms; but, unfortunately, as I have before stated, he is so avaricious that it is highly probable that he will try to get money and arms out of the Russians as well as ourselves. It is a fact, indeed, that even this year, and after Captain Durand's visit, he sent two letters to Captain Grombtchevsky; and, sooner than allow such intrigues to be successful, it may be necessary for us to show him that, although our only wish is to be on friendly terms with him, yet he must implicitly obey the conditions upon which we subsidise him, and if he refuses to appreciate this it may possibly be advisable to make him more fully acquainted than he at present is with our military power.

19. Fortunately for us it would not be so difficult to conduct military operations against Hunza from the south as it is from the north, for not only the Rájá's palace, but fully two-thirds of the entire populated and cultivated part of the country lies on the right bank of the Hunza River and is commanded within artillery range from the left bank, which belongs to Nagar. Moreover, at Chalt, on the road to Gilgit, both banks of the river belong to Nagar, and consequently, if the Rájá of that State agreed to allow the passage of troops through his country, a good mountain battery could, in a very short time, lay the greater part of Hunza in ruins. From what I have seen of the people, I should not imagine that their degree of loyalty to the Rájá was anything very great, and though we do not yet know them sufficiently to say so at all certainly, yet my impression is that, if they saw their forts, on which

Possibility of invading it.

they set so much store, crumbling into ruins under our artillery fire, they would not offer much further resistance, and we should then have it in our power to dictate our terms to the Rájá, put our relations on a more satisfactory footing, and make proper arrangements for the opposing of any hostile force attempting to enter the country from the north.

20. From what has been said above, it will be clear that it is necessary to have satisfactory relations with the people of Nagar in order to prevent them allying themselves with Hunza. But it has always been the traditional policy of these two States, however much they might differ in time of peace, to bind themselves together in time of war, and should they do so when it may become necessary for us to conduct military operations against Hunza, it would enormously increase our difficulties, for we should then have to fight our way through a very difficult country which now belongs to Nagar before we could get at Hunza at all, and, moreover, we should have to fight with a people who, whatever may be the inclinations of their rulers, are themselves evidently anxious to be friendly with us. It is very desirable, therefore, that our relations with Nagar should be close and intimate, so that if unhappily we should have to deal by force with Hunza, we might get an unobstructed passage through Nagar territory.

21. Should we not be able to secure this advantage, our difficulties would be much increased, though it might be possible to make a sudden march through Nagar territory without any warning whatever, so as to catch the Hunza people unprepared for such an eventuality. Hunza is only two long marches from Chalt, the furthest Kashmiri outpost, while Chalt is only two marches from Gilgit; and when the force in the neighbourhood of the latter place has been made efficient, a mountain battery stationed there, and the details of supplies and transport well worked out, it might, I think, if the time were chosen when the new reliefs had arrived and the others not yet returned, and when there might also happen to be some English officers shooting in the neighbourhood, be

Importance of Nagar.  
Chances of an invasion of Hunza through Nagar.

possible to make a rapid unexpected march through Nagar territory, and place a mountain battery, backed up by 1,000 or 1,500 infantry, in a good position opposite Hunza. If, however, neither the neutrality of Nagar can be secured by political action, nor a passage through the country by surprise, it is probable that a force larger than that at the disposal of the British Agent at Gilgit would be necessary in fighting our way through Nagar and subduing Hunza, and that the aid of at least one battalion of our own Native troops would be required.

22. The case of military operations against Hunza has been referred to at some length, because, though it is highly desirable that our paramount influence should be established by peaceful means if possible, it is quite probable that warlike measures may become unavoidable, not only to bring the Hunza Rájá to his senses, but in order also to produce a good general effect upon the neighbouring chiefs. With less ignorant people the system of subsidising and peaceful measures might be sufficient, but to be successful in dealing with these wild chiefs of the Hindu Kush it is very necessary to make them feel that there is force in the background, which can and will be used if necessary; and though every means should be employed to gain our ends without having to resort to military operations, yet we must be prepared for such an eventuality, and I believe that, when one of these independent chiefs has been made to feel our strength, the task of dealing with the remainder will become very much easier, and though my visit was too short for me to be able to form an accurate opinion, the impression left upon me was that when once the chiefs have been brought well under control, there will be little difficulty with the people, who are of a far less warlike character than the Afghans, and would probably gladly welcome a more settled state of affairs in which they would not be continually liable for those petty wars got up between rival chieftains.

23. But little remains to add in conclusion of this narrative. The expedition reached Gilgit at the end of November, and was there warmly

Return of party to India.

welcomed by the newly-appointed British Agent, Lieutenant-Colonel Durand, and his assistant, Lieutenant Manners-Smith. After halting a few days there, we set out again by double marches for Kashmir, hurrying on in order to cross the Burzil and Tragbal passes before they were closed by snow for the winter. We were but just in time, for snow was falling on both the passes as we crossed them. December 16th, however, found the whole expedition safely in the Kashmir Valley, and from there we travelled rapidly on to the Punjab, the Gurkha escort turning off at Mozufferabad for Abbottabad.

24. It was with no little reluctance that I parted with Good services of Gurkha escort. these gallant little men, for both they and the sowar Shazad Mir from the 11th Bengal Lancers had done excellent service, being always cheerful and ready to do all the hard work which fell to them, and making one feel that in case of emergency they would have stood by one to the last.

25. On my return, His Excellency the Viceroy was pleased Congratulation from Government on success of expedition. to send by telegraph, through the Resident in Kashmir, his congratulations to me on the successful issue of the expedition. I was also honoured with telegrams of congratulation from His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief, the Foreign Secretary, and the Resident in Kashmir; and in concluding this narrative of the conduct of the expedition, I should wish to place on record my grateful appreciation of the support and encouragement which were so freely given me by the Government of India and the officers serving under their direction. Without such support, the difficulties of the expedition would have been much increased, and its successful termination is in a very considerable measure due to the free hand and full assistance given to the leader at starting, and the support and encouragement shown him during its conduct.

## CHAPTER VI.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE COUNTRY BEYOND THE  
NORTHERN FRONTIER OF KASHMIR.

1. General characteristics—2. Mountain ranges—3. The Mustágh Mountains—4. Passes across the Mústágh Mountains—5. The Kuenlun Mountains—6. The Aghil range—7. The Kúrhu range—8. The Yárkand River—9. The Oprang River—10. Climate—11. Vegetable productions—12. Mineral productions—13. Animal productions—14. The southern boundary of Chinese Turkestan—15. Northern boundary of Kashmir: (1) along the Kuen-lun Mountains—16; (2) along the Indus watershed—17; (3) as at present laid down on official maps.

1. The country to be now described forms the basin of the upper waters of the Yárkand River, lying between the Mustágh Mountains on the south and the western Kuenlun Mountains on the north, and extending from the Tágh-dúm-básh Pámir on the west to the Kárákoram Pass on the east. The whole of this tract is a vast mass of lofty mountains, and even the lowest valley-bottoms are situated at a very considerable altitude above the sea-level. With the exception of a few Kirghiz on the Tágh-dúm-básh Pámir and at Sháhidúla, it is entirely unpopulated, and, owing to its extreme elevation and the rigour of the climate, is, except in a few places along the Yárkand River, uncultivable. The mountain summits are covered with perpetual snow, and their sides—sometimes rocky precipices and sometimes steep slopes of shale and débris—are always utterly devoid of vegetation; so that in the whole of this tract not a single tree is to be seen on the mountain-sides, and even in the valley-bottoms only in a few places in the lowest part of Raskam.

2. The two principal ranges of mountains are the Mustágh and the Kuenlun, and from the former two subsidiary ranges branch off. The first, which may be called the Aghil range, after the Aghil Pass, which crosses it, strikes off in a north-westerly direction from a point a few miles westward of the Kárákoram Pass, and divides the largest branch of the Yárkand River from its

General characteristics.

Mountain ranges.

principal tributary the Oprang River. The other subsidiary range runs out from the neighbourhood of the Khúnjeráb Pass in a north direction to Sarikol.

3. The range of mountains which forms the watershed of the Indus River system, though the natives of the country have no name for it, is generally called by us the Hindu Kush in the western portion, and either the Mústágh or Kárákoram Mountains in the eastern part. Kárákoram means black gravel, a name applied by natives to the pass on the road between Leh and Yárkand. Mústágh, on the other hand, means ice-mountains, and is a far more appropriate name for the loftiest range of mountains in the world; so, in this report, I will refer to the portion of the Indus watershed extending from the bend of the Hindu Kush Mountains to the Kárákoram Pass as the Mústágh Mountains. This range runs in a general direction from W.N.W. to E.S.E; its highest point is reached in the vicinity of the Mústágh Pass, where one peak (K 2) rises to the stupendous height of 28,278 feet, and is the second highest mountain in the world, Mount Everest only exceeding it. Four other peaks are over 26,000 feet, and it may probably be said that hardly a peak on the main axis of the range is under 20,000 feet. With mountains of such enormous height there is naturally a vast extent of glaciers, and these are found in greatest extent between the headwaters of the Oprang River and the vicinity of the Shimshál Pass. Here, on both sides of the range, may be seen vast seas of ice filling up the valley-bottoms. Perhaps the largest glacier on the northern side is that running down in an easterly direction near Suget Jangal; this is some 24 miles long and about 2 miles broad, but it is surpassed by the great Baltoro glacier on the southern side of the Mústágh Pass, which is 38 miles in length and from 4 to 5 miles broad. These glaciers extend down on the northern side to a height of from 12,000 to 13,000 feet above sea-level, but on the southern side reach considerably lower, and at Askole in Báltistán one reaches as low down as 10,000 feet and at Pású in Hunza even to 9,000 feet. On the southern side certainly they are on the

advance, and the mass of ice in these regions appears to be gradually accumulating and closing up the passes. Thirty or forty years ago men used frequently to cross the Mústágh and Sálto Passes, whereas now such a thing is never heard of. As a general rule it may be taken that the slopes on the southern side are greater and the valleys deeper than on the northern side, and this I should attribute to the greater proportion of rain and snow-fall to the south, which washes out the valleys and eats away the mountain-sides. At a former period the whole region must have been more glacial than it is now; the glaciers gradually melted as the warmer climate came on, and the valleys were left filled with the moraine which these had collected from the mountain-sides. On the Pámir and near the Kárakoram Pass, we see what must have formerly been deep valleys now filled up almost to the brim with this débris, and so plains are found between two ranges of mountains; then, as a warmer climate came in, the snow melted more rapidly and for a longer time during summer, and the valleys were gradually washed out again by the streams which were formed, and on the southern side of the great range, which would naturally catch more of the monsoon, and which would also attract more of the rays of the sun, there are larger streams, and the valleys have been washed out sooner. Now it would almost appear that we are gradually going back again to another period of glaciers, and that, if the glaciers advance as they at present seem to be doing on the southern side, the deep valleys of Báltistán and Hunza may, in geological ages yet to come, again be filled up.

4. The heights of the passes across this range vary considerably. The Kárakoram Pass is 18,550 feet, and the Mústágh and Sálto Passes are at least as lofty, if not more so; but west of these we met with extraordinary depressions in the range, and the Shimshál, the Khúnjeráb, and Mintaka Passes are all between 14,300 and 14,700 feet. At the Shimshál Pass we came across a very remarkable change in the character of the range, for, whereas to the east the mountains, besides being very lofty

Passes across the  
Mústágh Mountains.

are also noticeable for their bold and rugged outline, they here suddenly drop down to a wide depression, forming a small plain on which two lakes are situated actually on the watershed, at an elevation of only 14,700 feet above sea-level; and beyond this, to the westward, the peaks of the range, though still very lofty, lose their abrupt and bold appearance and become more tame and round, though, curiously enough, the spurs which run out to the south retain the rugged appearance which is the characteristic of the Mústágh Mountains.

5. The range to the north of the tract now under consideration is known to European and Chinese geographers by the name of Kuénlun Mountains; it is a range of lesser height than the Mústágh Mountains, the highest peaks rising certainly not over 23,000 feet. It is characterised by the bold and rugged appearance of the peaks; its southern declivities are broken up into short transverse valleys, and on the northern side it throws out a series of long spurs running out towards Kilian and Yárkand. The mountain-sides are perfectly bare, but along the bed of the streams in the northern side, good stretches of jungle are often met with. The principal passes across this range are the Sanju (16,650 feet), the Kilian (17,800 feet), the Kilik (17,000?), the Yangi (16,000), the Chiragsáldi (16,000?), Tashkurgan, Isak, and the Kokalung. The first three of these are all steep and difficult passes. The Yangi and Chiragsáldi are fairly easy, and of the last three named nothing is known except that it is said that ponies may be taken across them.

6. The Aghil range runs in a general north-west direction between the two ranges already described. The Aghil range. It is about 120 miles in length, and is broken up into a series of bold, upstanding peaks, rising to a height of about 23,000 feet; near its junction with the Mústágh Mountains there are some large glaciers, which are found in the valleys of the Mústágh Mountains. But on the westward these *mers-de-glace* are not seen, and only the smaller kind of glaciers are found on the higher slopes. The

Aghil range is utterly devoid of vegetation, and only the scantiest description of scrub is met with in the valley-bottoms. The only known pass across this range is the Aghil Pass (15,300 feet), a remarkably easy one, being a Pámir-like depression between lofty rocky mountains.

7. The Kurbu range, which runs out from the Mústágh Mountains in a northerly direction from a point near the Khúnjeráb Pass, differs in character from the mountains just described, for its summits and slopes are more rounded, and the highest peaks do not rise above a height of probably about 20,000 feet. No trees are seen on the slopes, but grass is plentiful on the lower portions on the western side, and in the shallow valleys which run down towards the Tágh-dúm-básh Pámir. These shallow valleys on the western side form a strong contrast to the deep narrow gorges which run down from the range on the eastern side into the valley of the Yárkand River. In the eastern valleys trees are found in fair quantities, and the valley of the Túng River especially is remarkable for its fertility.

8. Turning now to the rivers, the whole of the tract is drained by a number of streams, which, flowing together, form the Yárkand River. The largest branch has its rise at a spot discovered by Hayward near the Kárákoram Pass, and from there it flows in a northerly direction to Kirghiz Jangal, when it sweeps round almost at right angles in a general westerly direction to near Chong Jangal, where it receives the Oprang River, a stream of almost twice its volume, though not so great in length. From Chong Jangal the river turns in a north-westerly direction to the junction of the Ilisu River, and then it passes through a number of impassable gorges, and flows in a north-easterly direction towards the plains of Turkestán, and is eventually buried in the sands of the Gobi desert and in Lake Lob-nor. A portion of the valley of this river between Kirghiz Jangal and the junction of the Ilisu River is known to the Kirghiz by the name of Raskam, and the river itself is often called the Raskam darya. In this portion, especially in

the western part, good stretches of grass and jungle are seen, and below Chong Jangal trees, too, are met with, where possibly the land used in former times to be cultivated and fruit trees grown. The mountain slopes, however, are quite bare, and are generally in the form of long slopes of shale and débris, though at some parts they close in and form steep rocky gorges. The depth and volume of this river vary very considerably according to the season of the year. In the summer months, even in its upper course, it is quite unfordable, but by the middle of September it can be forded as low down as Chong Jangal, and by the middle of October as far as the Ilisu River. In the eastern portion of Raskam it flows over a wide pebbly bed sometimes a mile in width, while the stream itself in September was from 30 to 40 yards broad, with a depth of 2 or 3 feet. After the junction of the Oprang River the stream becomes very considerable, and even at the end of October I found it to be some 40 yards wide, with a depth of from  $3\frac{1}{2}$  to 4 feet; and lower down, near the junction of the Túng River, it becomes quite unfordable, and has to be crossed by means of rafts. Its principle tributaries in the region now being described are, on the north, the Bazar Darra River, and on the south the Kanbaskan, the Surukwát, the Oprang, the Uruk, and the Ilisu Rivers: all of these are quite insignificant except the Oprang River, which, as has been before stated, is in volume double the size of the longer branch of the Yárkard River.

9. The Oprang River receives the entire drainage of the vast glacier region on the northern slopes of the Mústágh Mountains rising amongst these in about latitude  $35^{\circ}40'$ , longitude  $77^{\circ}40'$ , issuing from an immense glacier. After receiving the waters of the other glaciers flowing down from the Sáltoro Pass, the Gusherbrum peaks and the great peak K 2, it flows in a north-westerly direction towards the Aghil Pass, and then westward to the junction of the Sarpolaggo River, which is formed by the waters flowing from the glaciers in the region near the Mústágh Pass; then it turns north-west again, receives the stream flowing from the neighbourhood of the Shimshál Pass, and near

Shor-bulák it makes a remarkable turn back, winding considerably, and finally flowing into the Yárkand River some 4 miles above Chong Jangal. Its total length is about 130 miles; its depth and volume, as is naturally the case in a stream entirely formed from the melting of glaciers, vary very much according to the season of the year, but even in its upper portion near its source I have found it in the middle of September to be  $2\frac{1}{2}$  to 3 feet deep and about 40 yards wide, while in the middle of October near its junction with the Yárkand River it was some 4 feet deep.

The valley-bottom of the Oprang River is generally of considerable width, varying from half a mile to one mile; it is flat, and covered with pebbles, with patches of grass and jungle here and there. The mountain-sides are bare and precipitous, and they are quite impracticable for animals, but men can sometimes find a path along them. The most considerable tributary of the Oprang River is the Sarpolaggo stream flowing down from the Mústágh Pass and draining the great glacier region in that neighbourhood. Next to this is the Af-di-gar River, which is of importance as the route to the Shimshál Valley leads up it, and a Kanjúti outpost is situated some 6 miles from its junction with the Oprang River. In the valley of this stream there are considerable patches of good grass and jungle, and it is at times inhabited by Kanjútis; it rises in a large glacier on the borders of the Báltistán, up which some six years ago the Kanjútis sought a route into Báltistán, but twenty of their men were lost in crevasses. Another tributary of the Oprang River is a stream which flows down from the Oprang Pass on the Tágh-dúm-básh Pámir, and joins the Oprang River at the camping ground of Shor-bulák. There is said to have been a road up this valley, but, owing to landslips, it has now fallen into disuse.

10. The climate of this region is one of great severity.

*Climate.*

At the western end of Raskam, at a height of 9,000 feet above the sea, the thermometer, even in the middle of October, fell to  $-4^{\circ}$  Fahrenheit, and in the depth of winter it must, of course, be considerably below

this, while in the higher regions the cold must be very intense. On the Tágh-dúm-básh Pámir, although the weather seemed to be very much colder, on account of the bitter wind which blew continuously, the thermometer did not fall in the beginning of November below  $-5^{\circ}$  Fahrenheit, though, at the same time, in the sun in the middle of the day I have seen the thermometer marking  $11^{\circ}$ , the rays of the sun being, as it were, blown away by the cold blast of the wind. These winds, which one meets with in these regions, deserve some notice, for they not only affect the personal comfort of the traveller very much, but also have a considerable effect upon the surrounding country, for the whole region being composed of lofty mountains and deep valleys, there is constant passage of air between the warmer regions of the valleys below and the colder regions of the glaciers and ice-peaks above; as the day warms up, terrific winds are often encountered in the valleys, while on the passes the wind rushes along as through a funnel: it is often difficult indeed to stand up against it. With this wind large bodies of sand are driven along in the valley-bottoms and deposited on the mountain-sides. A curious phenomenon, too, is seen as the result of this high wind on the mountains. The summits appear to be, as it were, consuming away, vanishing into light mist; and this is caused by the strong wind blowing away the fine dust-like snow at the summits in great clouds, and thus producing the effect mentioned. This phenomenon must, however, be distinguished from what are called mountain streamers, which consist of long, thin clouds, streaming away in a horizontal direction from the summit of a peak; this is only seen when there is considerable moisture in the air, and is probably caused by the warm moisture-laden air from the plains rushing upwards, and, on coming in contact with the cold icy peaks, condensing into cloud. There is no information as to the condition of this region in summer, but the valley of the Yárkand River is certainly warm enough to allow cultivation, and fruit trees are met with at the western end of Raskam.

11. The vegetable productions of any useful description from this region are almost *nil*, a small amount of timber, generally a description of birch or poplar, being the only thing obtainable, besides jungle, scrub, and coarse grass.

12. As regards the mineral productions, the name of the country Raskam (Rás-kám, a real mine) would lead one to suppose that these were very considerable, but in a hurried visit to a country it is impossible to bring back any reliable data upon such a point. Remains of furnaces used by former inhabitants are very frequently met with. Gold, iron, copper, and lead are said to be found in the valley of the Yárkand River.

13. The animal productions are as deficient as the other natural productions. The wild ass known as the *kulan* or *kyang* are frequently seen in small herds or singly, and they are very useful to the travellers on account of the tracks which they form in these otherwise pathless mountains. Besides these the only other wild game one meets with in the Mústágh Mountains are the *shapoo*, but, on the Tágh-dúm-básh Pámir the magnificent wild sheep known as the *ovis poli* is common. The Kirghiz keep large flocks of sheep and goats, and also a fair number of camels, yaks, and ponies. In the neighbourhood of Sháhidúla there may be between 30 to 40 camels and 50 or 60 ponies, and perhaps the same number of yaks. On the Tágh-dúm-básh Pámir there are probably not more than about 20 camels, 30 or 40 yaks, and 60 ponies; but the number of sheep and goats on the Tágh-dúm-básh Pámir will probably be as much as 6 or 800.

14. The country described above is for the most part a "no-man's land," and to lay down any particular boundaries is at present very difficult. The Tágh-dúm-básh Pámir undisputably belongs to China, and therefore the Mústágh Mountains here form a definite boundary between the countries under our influence and those under the authority of China. But further east the Chinese have never asserted an author-

ity over the valley of the Yárkand River, and it is only this year that they have asserted any definite authority over the Sháhídúla district, the limits of their jurisdiction for all practical purposes having hitherto been the Kuenlun range, with frontier posts at Kugiar, Kilian, and Sanjú. In their former occupation of Turkestán, the Chinese certainly made no pretensions to any authority on the southern side of the Kuenlun Mountains, and the Máharájá built and for some years occupied the fort at Sháhídúla. When, however, Yakúb Beg came into possession of Eastern Turkestán, he occupied Sháhídúla, and his troops held it till they were obliged to retire on the reconquest of Yárkand by the Chinese. Since then, till the present year, it has been left unoccupied, but the Kirghiz in the neighbourhood paid taxes to, and acknowledged the authority of, the Chinese. Now, according to the latest information, the Chinese have stationed a guard at Sháhídúla, and have therefore definitely set up a claim to that place.

15. If this claim is acknowledged, the frontier between Kashmir and Chinese Turkestán will have

Northern boundary  
of Kashmir:

(1) along the Kuen-  
lun Mountains;

to be drawn somewhere to the south, and the choice of two lines is offered. The first of these would run along the spur from the Kuenlun range which is crossed by the Suget and Sokh-bulák Passes, and would continue along the crest of the Kuenlun Mountains to their western extremity, and then, crossing the Yárkand River below the junction of the Ilisu, strike the Kurbu range near the Kurbu Pass, and run along it till it met the Mústágh Mountains east of the Khúnjeráb Pass. Such a line has little to recommend it, except that it includes the district of Raskam, in the valley of the Yárkand River, which, sooner than allow the Russians to gain a footing there, it would be advisable for us to occupy, if we cannot induce the Chinese to recognise it as theirs.

16. The alternative line would run the whole way along the crest of the Mústágh Mountains, through the Kárákoram, Sh nshál, and Khúnjeráb Passes to the Kilik, where it would join the Hindu Kush. This is the natural and proba-

(2) along the Indus  
watershed;

bly the best boundary, for it follows, throughout, the great Indus watershed dividing the waters of India from those of Central Asia.

17. Between the two lines detailed above, there is the one which is laid down as the boundary of Kashmir on our official maps; this follows the course of the Yárkand River. But such a line is an impracticable one, for the river is fordable, and the road crosses frequently from side to side, and therefore the frontier line to be of any use must follow the mountain crests on one side or the other. It may be advisable, however, to run the line from the Kárákoram Pass north-east through the Kárátágh Pass, to the bend of the Kárákásh River, and thus include, as at present laid down on our maps, the Lingzi-thang plains, up to the eastern Kuenlun Mountains. This tract of country has no practical importance, as the plains are uninhabited and uninhabitable, but it may possibly be gratifying to the Máharájá of Kashmir to feel himself in possession of so many extra square miles of country.

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## CHAPTER VII.

## STRATEGICAL ASPECT OF THE NORTHERN FRONTIER OF KASHMIR.

1. The Mústágh Mountains—2. Passes across them—3. Difficulty of country to the south—4. Routes from the Russian frontier to Hunza—5. Routes from Chinese Turkestan towards Hunza—6. Routes from Yárkand to Leh—7. Supplies on the Pámir route—8. Supplies on the route to Leh—9. Difficulties of an invasion by Hunza or Gilgit—10. Similar difficulties of an invasion by the Kárákoram Pass on Leh—11. Measures necessary for securing our frontier.

1. The north of Kashmir is bounded by a stupendous mass of mountains, culminating in the great range which divides the waters which flow to India from those which take their way towards Central Asia, and which is variously known in different parts as the Hindu Kush, the Mústágh, and the Kárákoram Mountains. The portion of the range known as the Hindu Kush was examined by Colonel Lockhart's Mission, and has been reported on by him. The eastern portion, known as the Mústágh Mountains, will now be dealt with. This may be said to extend from the Kilik Pass (in latitude  $37^{\circ}$ , longitude  $75^{\circ}$ ) to the Kárákoram Pass, on the route from Leh to Yárkand, and a full description of it will be found on page 92.

Passes across them.

2. Across this range of mountains there are the following passes:—

- (1) Kárákoram Pass (18,550 feet), easy and practicable all the year round for ponies and camels.
- (2) Sálto Pass, now disused and quite impracticable.
- (3) Mustágh Passes, ditto ditto.
- (4) Shimshál or Shingshál Pass (14,700 feet), easy and practicable for ponies.
- (5) Khúnjeráb Pass (14,300 feet), easy and practicable for ponies.
- (6) Mintaka Pass (14,400 feet), practicable for ponies.

Between the Kárákoram Pass and the Shimshál there is an immense region of glaciers, which makes the country quite impracticable for the passage of troops, though in former

days parties of men used to cross the range by the Sáltoro and Mústágh Passes into Báltistán. Now-a-days, however, there is no way by which an army could penetrate into Báltistán across the main range, and the next pass westward is the Shimshál, leading into Hunza; this and the Khúnjeráb and Mintaka, which also lead into the valley of the Hunza River, are practicable for laden ponies.

3. The main range of the Mústágh Mountains can therefore be crossed at four points into Leh and Hunza without much difficulty, but the value of a chain must be tested by that of the weakest link, and in this case the value of the various routes leading towards Kashmir must be tested, not by the practicability of the actual crossings of the Mústágh Mountains, but by the character of the country on the southern side, which fortunately for us is of an extremely difficult character, so that, although the Mústágh Mountains may be crossed comparatively easily, an invading army would find it well nigh impossible to force its way through the gorges of Hunza, or the deep valleys leading into Ladakh, if resolutely opposed by even a small force.

4. But although it is unlikely that the Russians would seriously invade Kashmir by either of these lines, it is highly probable that they may attempt to make a demonstration with a small force on Ladakh or Hunza with a view to paralysing our efforts in other directions, and I will now show by what routes they would be most likely to reach these frontier passes, the difficulties they would have to contend with on the way, and the probable chances of success. The cantonment in Russian Turkestan nearest to our northern frontier is that of Osh, from which place a column of 2,500 men with six guns actually set out in 1878 towards our frontier. This cantonment is, however, 204 miles from the furthest limit of Russian territory at the Tuyuksu Pass from which a practicable route for animals leads over the Pámirs, up the valley of the Aksu River; and by Aktásh to either Wakhán or, by the Baiyik Pass, to the Tágh-dúm-básh Pámir. From Wakhán, Chitrál or Gilgit may be reached by the Baroghil route as related by Colonel

Lockhart. From the Tágh-dúm-básh Pámir, Hunza may be invaded by either the Kilik, the Mintaka, or Khúnjeráb Passes, or a force might march from the Tágh-dúm-básh Pámir by the valley of the Yárkand River to the Kárákoram Pass by a route practicable throughout for ponies and camels.<sup>1</sup>

5. The above routes have been taken with Osh as their base, but it is probable that, even if the Russians do not occupy Kashgar and Yárkand, they will use these towns as bases for supplies for the forces operating from Osh, and it is therefore necessary to show what routes lead from those places towards Kashmir. From Kashgar the Tágh-dúm-básh Pámir may be reached in 10 marches by the somewhat difficult route of the Gez defile; it is generally practicable for ponies, but in the summer months is liable to floods from the rain and melting snow. From Yárkand, Táshkurgán at the head of the Tágh-dúm-básh Pámir may be reached by the Ighizyar route in 12 marches; this is the best road, and is in general use by traders between Yárkand and Badakshán. A second route, also practicable for ponies, but more difficult and less frequented, is that by Kuserab; while a third, which is only practicable for men on foot, and which is rarely used, leads by the valley of the Tung River.

6. To the Kárákoram Pass on the road to Leh four routes practicable for ponies lead from Yárkand, *viz.* :—

- (1) By Kugiar and the Yangi Dawán. This is the best route in the winter, but between the months of April and September is impassable on account of the increased depth of the rivers, through the melting of the snow.
- (2) By the Kilik Pass, not now in use, but can be made practicable for ponies.
- (3) By the Kilian Pass and Sháhidúla, the route now in use by traders. The Pass is a very difficult one, 17,800 feet high and very steep, but laden ponies can be taken over it.

<sup>1</sup> For details of routes, see Chapter VIII

(4) By the Sánju Pass, also a difficult one, but in common use.

7. It has been thought, however, by many people that the <sup>Supplies on the</sup> passage of the Pámirs would be a serious <sup>Pámir route.</sup> obstacle to an invading force. The route from Osh by the Tuyuksu Pass over the Pámirs certainly leads across high passes and elevated plateaux, but an army would in this part in all probability be quite unopposed, and the physical difficulties of the route are really not very great, for the country on the northern side of the main range is much easier in character than that on the south side. There is indeed the risk of snow and great cold, but Russian soldiers, who even in time of peace have been marched in January and February across the steppes from Orenberg to Tashkend, would not think much of this, and the Russian officers on the Afghan Boundary Commission told our officers that cold would never prevent active operations on their part. If the autumn months were chosen, they would find little or no snow, and they would arrive on the frontier when the rivers were at their lowest and the country to the south of the range easiest. The difficulties of the route, and those usually ascribed to the Pámirs on account of their elevated character have therefore probably been too much exaggerated; and with regard to supplies, although no crops are grown in these elevated regions, and supplies of grain are unprocurable, yet large flocks of sheep, goats, and yaks are kept by the Khirghiz who live in these parts, and for a short time, at any rate, or with perhaps a limited supply of flour brought down from Yárkand or Kashgar, the force might support itself in a march across the Pámirs; for Russian soldiers are not particular what they eat, and last year I found Captain Grombtchevsky feeding his Cossacks almost entirely upon mutton, driving along a large flock of sheep with him, and for a period of three months they only had 80lb of flour for 12 men. Fuel is somewhat scarce on the Pámirs, but sufficient quantities of scrub and dried dung for cooking purposes could always be obtained.

8. From the Tágh-dúm-básh Pámir no supplies on the route to Ladakh are at present obtainable, until after the Kárákoram and Saser Passes have been crossed, and the Nubra Valley reached; but in future years, as has been before stated, the valley of the Yárkand River may again become populated and cultivated, and supplies may therefore be forthcoming. At present a force operating by this line would have to obtain its supplies from Yárkand and Kugiar, and it is probable that a General would only adopt this line of advance in the case of its being desirable to avoid passing through the garrisoned parts of Chinese Turkestan.

9. Premising, therefore, that it is perfectly feasible for a force of, say, 2,500 men, with 6 guns (the strength of the force which left Margilán in 1878 for the Pámir) to reach the northern slopes of the Mústágh Mountains, let us examine what would be its next movements, and what measures on our part would be necessary for checking its advance into Kashmir. From what has been said in paragraph 2 it will be seen that Gilgit (*via* Hunza) and Leh are the only two points open to attack, and that the advance of any force upon Skardú is quite impracticable. Dealing first with the advance upon Gilgit, the easiest points of approach are the Kilik and Mintaka Passes, which are 12 marches distant from Gilgit. In the summer and autumn these passes can be crossed without difficulty, but once in the valley of the Hunza River very serious difficulties would be met with. The valley is in many places only a few hundred yards broad, and is bounded by precipitous cliffs of enormous height, and so steep and rugged that they quite preclude the idea of any flanking parties being able to march along them. The river itself in the summer months is quite unfordable, and the only path down the valley in that season of the year leads by rocky staircases and narrow flanks supported on the sides of the cliffs. In the late autumn about the end of October the melting of the snow has ceased, and the river becomes fordable in many places, and at the time when I passed through in the

middle of November it might be possible for a force to march down this valley, but even then the difficulties would be great, and to delay a force very considerably would be an easy matter, and the position of a commander shut up in a deep valley, with few supplies obtainable, with the winter snows closing the passes behind him, and a difficult route in front of him, would not be an enviable one.

10. We will turn now to the other line of advance—that by the Kárákoram Pass on Leh. The Pass itself can be crossed without difficulty, but here again the intricate character of the country on this side of the range would be the chief obstacle to an enemy's advance. Between the Kárákoram Pass and the Shayok River, the road, after crossing the Depsang plains, passes through some narrow deep gorges, where it would be very easy to check the advance of an army. But supposing these defiles were forced, the next obstacle an enemy would meet with would be the Shayok River, at the north foot of the Saser Pass ; this river is never fordable, and there are no boats or trees in the neighbourhood with which to make boats. The next obstacle would be the passage of the Saser Pass, 17,800 feet high, with a large glacier on its summit ; and then the passage of the Káráwal Pass, 15,000 feet, the ascent on both sides of which consists of steep, difficult zig-zags. Having surmounted all these obstacles, the enemy would at last find himself in an inhabited country in the valley of the Nubra River, but he would not yet have reached Leh, and would still have a second passage of the Shayok River, and the difficult Khardung Pass, 17,500 feet high, with a glacier on its summit, to get over before he arrived at his destination. Then after all his trouble he would only find himself in a country which, under the best of circumstances, could afford but scanty provision for an army, and to an invader need afford none at all, while Kashmir would still be distant, and the invading army would have to force a passage of the Indus, fight its way through many difficult gorges and over rapid mountain torrents, and cross the Zoji-la Pass before the Happy Valley was at length reached.

Similar difficulties  
of an invasion by the  
Kárákoram Pass on  
Leh.

11. So, although a small force might without any great difficulty present itself close up to our northern frontier, yet the difficulties it would have to contend with on the southern side of the main range would be so great that it would probably be unnecessary to make any elaborate preparation, or detach any of our regular army to oppose an invading force, and the only measures which would seem to be necessary for securing the portion of our frontier dealt with in this report are first to establish a firm control over the Hunza Rájá, as pointed out in Chapter V, so as to ensure that no enemy would be left unopposed by the people of Hunza, and, second, to have a small reliable force of Kashmir reorganised troops at Leh, and suitable positions selected for opposing an invader between that place and the Kárákoram Pass. With such measures effectively carried out it would probably be impossible for an enemy to gain a footing on this side of the main range, or even if he did, to maintain himself there for any length of time; and though the presence of a Russian force on our frontier would undoubtedly cause considerable excitement in Kashmir at first, and embarrass us to some degree, yet we may bear in mind that the further the invaders advanced the greater their difficulties would become, and any one who has visited the country can easily conceive a position in which the invading army would find itself unable to force some well-defended position in front, unable to stay where it was on account of scarcity of provisions, and only able to retreat through some defile or across a river—a proceeding which, in the face of an enemy, would be attended by the utmost danger.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### COMMUNICATIONS.

Route 1.—Sháhidúla to the Shimshál Pass.

Route 2.—Sháhidúla to the Tágh-dúm-básh Pámir.

Route 3.—From the Tágh-dúm-básh Pámir to Hunza *viá* the Mintaka Pass.

Route 4.—From the Tágh-dúm-básh Pámir to Hunza *viá* the Khunjeráb Pass.

Route 5.—From Shaksgám to the Sálto Pass.

Route 6.—Shimshál-aksai to Chong Jangal.

Routes from Native information—

(a) Sháhidúla to Khotan.

(b) Sháhidúla to Khotan *viá* the Hindi-tásh Pass

#### Route 1.

#### SHÁHIDÚLA TO THE SHIMSHÁL PASS.

*194 miles ; 13 marches.*

Road practicable generally for laden animals, but impassable during the summer months, up till the end of August, on account of the depth of the Yárkand River. No supplies obtainable ; grass scarce and bad ; fuel fairly plentiful.

#### 1.—SHÁHIDÚLA TO THÁR.

*14 miles 4 furlongs, 6½ hours.*

Road good and practicable even for guns. Up the Khálchuskún stream ; grass plentiful and good the whole way ; brushwood plentiful in the lower part, scarce higher up.

8-30.—Leave Sháhidúla ascending open pebbly valley, 400 to 600 yards wide ; stream  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet deep, 15 yards wide.

9-10.—Patch of grass and jungle.

9-25.—Large strip of grass and jungle stretching down river.

9-35.—Cross stream.

9-55.—Patch of good grass and jungle.

10-0.—Cross gravel plain  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile wide. A path joins in here from Suget over a low pass.

11-10.—Descend 50 feet into bed of stream again ; brushwood and grass along course of stream.

Khál-chuskún, a plain covered with soda efflorescence and grass.

11-35.—Kárchin-jilga. Grass and brushwood. Road continues up the valley.

3-0.—Tár. Grass plentiful and good; fuel scarce, but obtainable.

## 2.—TÁR TO KIRGHIZ JANGAL.

*22 miles, 10 hours 50 minutes; from Shahidula 36½ miles.*

Road bad for  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles; then good up to Sokh-bulák Pass; then bad again to Yárkand River. Grass and fuel very scarce on road, but obtainable in small quantity in ravine leading down to Yárkand River, and in plenty at Kirghiz Jangal.

7-20.—Leave Tár. Road leads up valley, here narrowed to 300 yards, bounded by rocky mountains. Road stony and bad. At  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles leave stony bed of stream, and keep along smooth muddy side of hill (left bank) for 1 mile; then cross Kuksin stream, 5 yards broad, and another.

9-25.—Stretch of stone. At  $4\frac{1}{2}$  miles is junction of Sokh-bulák stream, up which is a road to the Suget Pass. The Khál-chuskún stream here flows over a pebbly bed 250 to 300 yards wide.

10-5.—Sokh-bulák camping ground. Grass plentiful; no fuel. Valley  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile wide. Road now good over an earth and gravel slope on left bank of stream.

12-15.—Descend gradually into bed of stream again, here pebbly, 120 yards broad.

1-10.—Leave bed of Khál-chuskún stream, and ascend a small ravine for  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile to the summit of the Sokh-bulák Pass (17,093 feet). (Halt 20 minutes.)

Ascent to pass gradual and easy; descent very steep for 600 yards, down side of mountain, to bed of a nullah, which road now descends for 8 miles to its junction with the Yárkand River. Bed of nullah covered with débris and boulders, and going, therefore, difficult. Grass and fuel scarce, but found here and there.

5-0.—Bed of Yárkand River, level, pebbly, 600 yards wide. River 30 yards wide, 3 feet deep; cross river twice.

6-10.—Kirghiz Jangal. Fuel plentiful; grass rather scarce. Bed of river is here  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile wide.

From here a route leads up the valley of the Yárkand River to Aktágh and the Kárákoram Pass—see Yárkand Mission Report.

3.—KIRGHIZ JANGAL TO KULANÚLDÍ.

*11 miles, 6 $\frac{1}{4}$  hours; from Sháhidúla 47 $\frac{1}{2}$  miles.*

Road good, following down bed of the Yárkand River, which is crossed four times; depth 2 $\frac{1}{2}$  feet. Fuel plentiful the whole way. Grass at Saskbulák (8 miles), and at Kulanúldí. Valley of the Yárkand River generally about half a mile broad. Lower part of mountain-sides shingle slopes; higher up, rocky precipices.

4.—KULANÚLDÍ TO CHIRÁGH-SÁLDÍ.

*18 miles; from Sháhidúla 65 $\frac{1}{2}$  miles.*

Continue down the pebbly bed of the Yárkand River, from  $\frac{3}{4}$  to 1 mile wide; crossing stream ten times; depth 2 $\frac{1}{2}$  feet. At 6 miles camping ground of Toka-nák, from which the route to Yárkand by Kugiar leads over the Yángi Pass. This is during the late autumn and up to March the best route from the Kárákoram Pass to Yárkand; 4 $\frac{1}{4}$  miles from Tokanák is a patch of good grass, called Bulák Báshi, and a mile beyond this a stream called the Kánbaskán, 15 yards broad by 1 foot to 1 $\frac{1}{2}$  feet deep, flows in from the south. At Chirágh-sáldí fuel and grass are plentiful, and from here a route leads over the Chirágh-sáldí Pass, joining in with that by the Yángi Pass to Yárkand, a few miles to the north of the latter pass. (For description of this route see Colonel Bell's Report on China, Vol. II, page 569.)

5.—CHIRÁGH-SÁLDÍ TO IGAR-SÁLDÍ.

*13 miles; from Sháhidúla 78 $\frac{1}{2}$  miles.*

Still descend the valley of the Yárkand River; at 2 $\frac{1}{4}$  miles stream from the north; at 6 $\frac{1}{2}$  miles another stream from the

north, up which a difficult track leads to Pákh-púlú. Beyond this the road crosses over the end of spur running down from the north, and at 8 miles ascends on to a fine patch of grass and jungle called Urdok-sáldi. Pass over this for  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a mile, then over a mass of boulders; at  $2\frac{1}{4}$  miles from Urdok-sáldi cross a plain with remains of houses on it, formerly occupied by Kirghiz, called Káráshtarim,  $3\frac{1}{4}$  miles long by 600 yards broad. At  $12\frac{1}{2}$  miles a path leads by steep zig-zag over a spur to the camping ground of Igar-sáldi; this path is only practicable for men on foot, and ponies have to be taken round the spur for a mile, crossing the river twice. At Igar-sáldi grass and fuel are plentiful; it is a camping ground situated in a gorge, the valley of the Yárkand River having narrowed to a width of 300 to 400 yards, with lofty, precipitous sides.

#### 6.—IGAR-SÁLDI TO SURUKWÁT.

*11 miles; from Sháhidúla  $89\frac{1}{2}$  miles.*

Still follow down the valley of the Yárkand River. Immediately on leaving Igar-sáldi the river has to be crossed four times to round a cliff;  $3\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile there is a patch of grass and jungle; at  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles the Bazár-darra stream, 20 yards wide by  $1\frac{1}{2}$  feet deep, flows in from the north, and at the junction there is a fine patch of grass and jungle, known as Ush-dawa. Up the Bazár-darra stream a road leads over the Kokalang Pass into the valley of the Kulan-árgú River, and from thence over the Táktakuran Pass into the valley of the Tis-náf River. From Ush-dawa ponies have to follow the course of the Yárkand River, crossing and recrossing it several times, but a path, practicable only for men on foot, leads over a spur, saving about 2 miles. At 10 miles is the Mohammed Khoja gorge, where the valley contracts, and the river flows between precipitous cliffs. On September 7th, 1889, the river was up to the ponies' backs, and flowing so rapidly that it was impossible for them to cross loaded, and the baggage had to be taken over on camels. On September 21st, 1887 I crossed the river with ponies, but with some difficulty, and at one place had to make a path round a cliff. Half a

mile beyond the gorge the Surukwát stream joins in from the south. There is a camping ground called Kul, where there is excellent grass and high jungle on the Yárkand River. A few hundred yards distant up the Surukwát stream is the camping ground of Surukwát. This march is a trying one on account of the depth of the Yárkand River. By the beginning of October, when the waters have fallen, there is no difficulty in crossing. From Surukwát a route leads down the valley of the Yárkand River to the Tág-dúm-básh Pámir—see Route 2.

#### 7.—SURUKWÁT TO ÁGHIL BOHOR.

*12½ miles, 9 hours 40 minutes (2 hours spent in making road)  
from Sháhidúla 102½ miles.*

Road good enough for 10½ miles, up the pebbly beds of the Surukwát and Aghil Pass streams; after that bad. Grass and fuel plentiful for 5 miles, then grass scarce; fuel can be found here and there the whole way.

8-0.—Leave Surukwát. Ascend the broad, pebbly bed of the Surukwát stream for 2½ miles till it bifurcates; then ascend the western branch, still over a pebbly bed ¼ mile wide. At 4½ miles a camping ground with plenty of grass and fuel is passed. At 9 miles a stream 12 yards wide and 9 inches to 1 foot deep joins in from the west, and, at 1½ miles beyond this, the Ághil Pass stream passes through two narrow gorges. It is possible to take both camels and ponies through these gorges, but a rough, steep pathway (which we had to spend two hours in improving) exists up the right bank of the stream. The first gorge is 150 yards in length, and the second 250 yards. Both are very narrow, in places only 5 yards wide; the bottom is rocky, and covered with boulders, and the stream, about 2 feet deep, flows with a very rapid current through them. (Two years ago I took my ponies through them, and they were then covered in places with ice, but it was difficult and dangerous work.) Beyond the gorges the road is very bad, ~~leading up the bed~~ of the stream, which is here covered

with big boulders for  $1\frac{1}{4}$  miles, and then ascending the right bank.

5-40.—Ághil Bohor is a camping ground in a small plain on the right bank of the Ághil Pass stream. Grass and fuel fairly plentiful.

#### 8.—ÁGHIL BOHOR TO SHAKSGÁM.

*11½ miles ; from Sháhíidúla 113¾ miles.*

Road fairly good, crossing the Ághil Pass (easy).

8-0.—Leave Ághil Bohor, ascending the Ághil Pass stream and passing for one mile over a plain 400 yards wide. At  $1\frac{1}{4}$  miles a stream comes down from the west, through a valley  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile wide, and about 6 to 8 miles long.

At  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles pass ruins of a hut near a patch of very good grass. The ascent is now easy and gradual, over the long slopes leading from the eastern range. Grass is plentiful and good ; fuel scarce.

At  $6\frac{1}{2}$  miles reach summit of the Ághil Pass, where there is a small lake  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile in length ; descent down ravine covered with boulders, rather bad.

3-0.—Shaksgám. A small patch of good grass ; fuel scarce ; on right bank of Oprang River. From here a route leads up the valley of the Oprang River to the Sálto-ro Pass—see Route 5.

#### 9.—SHAKSGÁM TO SARPOLAGGO.

*18 miles ; from Sháhíidúla 131¾ miles.*

Descend the valley of the Oprang River, pebbly bed  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile broad, crossing the river six times, width 20 to 30 yards, depth  $2\frac{1}{2}$  to 3 feet, mountain-sides rocky and precipitous. At 13 miles a pathway leads over a spur to the south, to Suget Jangal on the Mústágh Pass route to Skárdú in Báltistán. The Sarpolaggo camping ground is on the left bank of the Sarpolaggo stream, up which lies the route by Suget Jangal to the Mústágh Pass. (For an account of this see Colonel Bell's Report on China, page 570, Vol. II.)

On this march fuel and grass are scarce, and at the camping ground little grass is to be obtained.

10.—SARPOLAGGO TO KÁRÁTÁGH-BULÁK.

*12½ miles ; from Sháhidúla 154½ miles.*

Follow down the valley of the Oprang River, crossing the river six times, width 30 to 40 yards, depth  $2\frac{1}{2}$  to 3 feet ; valley bottom pebbly,  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile wide ; hill-sides steep. At 6 miles on the left bank are some remarkable waterfalls, and near them patches of very good grass. At Kárátágh-bulák camping ground there is excellent grass and plenty of jungle ; this is the best camping-ground on the route, and is frequented by Kanjútis.

11.—KÁRÁTÁGH-BULÁK TO YALPAK-TÁSH.

*7 hours 25 minutes, 13 miles 1 furlong ; from Sháhidúla 167½ miles.*

Road good down pebbly bed of Oprang River, which has to be crossed nine times ; depth  $2\frac{1}{2}$  to 3 feet. Fuel plentiful ; no grass.

Leave Kárátágh-bulák, descending valley of Oprang River ; pebbly bottom  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile wide ; hill-sides limestone cliff. Cross river seven times,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  to 3 feet deep.

Valley narrows to 300 yards and takes a bend to north road round spur on rocky ledge ; cross river and round counter-spur ; cross river again, and arrive at Yalpak-tásh ; bursa plentiful, but no grass.

12.—YALPAK-TÁSH TO ÁF-DI-GAR.

*12 miles ; from Sháhidúla 179½ miles.*

Road good, following down the valley of the Oprang River. Cross river seven times, depth 3 to  $3\frac{1}{2}$  feet ; current rapid. At  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles pass Shimshál-aksai at the junction of a stream running down from the Shimshál Pass. Grass and fuel are plentiful. Road then leaves the valley of the Oprang River, and ascends the right bank of the Af-di-gar stream for 5 miles, when it descends by a zig-zag to the bottom of a ravine, on the opposite bank of which is a Kanjúti outpost,

consisting of two towers connected by a wall, which completely blocks the way : this is usually known to the Kirghiz as the Darwáza. Beyond this the road crosses several small nullahs, at which there are small walls for defence. Several stretches of good grass, too, are crossed. At Af-di-gar grass and fuel plentiful.

13.—AF-DI-GAR TO SHORSHMA ÁGHIL

*14½ miles ; from Sháhidúla 194 miles.*

Ascend the valley of the Af-di-gar stream for  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles, and then turn off westward up a steep zig-zag, on the left bank of the small stream running down from the Shimshál Pass. The ascent up this zig-zag for  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles is steep, but not difficult ; and the road then gradually ascends to the summit of the pass, which is a plain, or pámir, and presents no difficulty whatever. A mile from the summit is a small village inhabited in the summer time by Kanjútis. On the summit there are two lakes. The descent is equally easy, till within  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile of Shorshma Ághil, where there is a steep zig-zag descent to the bed of a stream which flows down from a glacier. Here grass is obtainable, but no fuel, except dry dung.

From here a road leads to the valley of the Hunza River, descending the Shimshál River to Pású, but from all accounts it is very difficult, crossing three passes over subsidiary ranges, and leading by planks laid along the side of cliffs by the river. Ponies cannot be taken by this route, but a Kirghiz captive informed me that they are taken by the Múrkhún Pass (also a very difficult route) to Murkhún, a place three marches higher up the Hunza River than the junction of the Shimshál stream.

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Route 2.

SHÁHIDÚLA TO THE TAGH-DUM-BÁSH PÁMIR.

*180 miles, 14 marches.*

Road practicable for laden animals, but impassable for ponies during the summer months, up till the end of September or middle of October, on account of the depth of the

Yárkand River. Camels can be taken by the route a month or more earlier. No supplies obtainable *en route*; grass fairly plentiful, fuel plentiful. Sheep and goats can be obtained in abundance on the pámir, but no other form of supplies.

1-6.—SHÁHIDÚLA TO SURUKWÁT.

6 marches,  $89\frac{1}{2}$  miles (see Route No. 1).

7-9.—SURUKWÁT TO CHONG JANGAL.

Three marches (Azgar—Tashnuma—Chong Jangal), about 40 miles down the valley of the Yárkand River; road said to be difficult but practicable for ponies. Grass and fuel plentiful.

10.—CHONG JANGAL TO URUKSAI.

$13\frac{1}{4}$  miles; from Sháhidúla  $133\frac{1}{4}$  miles.

Ponies follow the bed of the Yárkand River, crossing and recrossing stream several times, which, even at the end of October, was nearly up to ponies' backs. A road for men on foot, and which could be easily made practicable for laden ponies, lies along the right bank of the stream. The bottom of the valley is about three-quarters of a mile broad, covered with pebbles, over which the river flows. The mountain-sides are in these parts chiefly shingle slopes, but at the side streams there is often an alluvial fan, on which are seen patches of scrub and grass, and also trees. These parts used in former times to be cultivated. Uruksai is at the mouth of the Uruk stream, flowing down from the south. Grass and fuel are plentiful at this camping ground, and, up the valley of the Uruk stream, Kirghiz even now cultivate small patches of ground.

11.—URUKSAI TO KHAIAN AKSAI.

11 miles; from Sháhidúla 144 miles.

Keep down the left bank of the Yárkand River for  $3\frac{1}{4}$  miles, to a large patch of high jungle called Sarik-kumish; opposite this there is another large stretch of jungle with a good many trees, and all about here used formerly to be well populated. At  $6\frac{1}{2}$  miles from Uruksai the road leaves the valley of the Yárkand River, and ascends the narrow valley of

the Ilisu River. There is no road down the Yárkand River, as the mountains are said to close in, so that the river runs between precipitous cliffs; but a road leads for one march down the valley over a kotal called the Tupa-dawán to a pasture ground, which is much frequented by the Kirghiz from the Tágh-dúm-básh Pámir. The valley of the Ilisu is choked up with a high jungle and trees which very much obstruct the passage of baggage animals. The stream itself is small; at the end of October it was from 10 to 15 yards broad, and about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  feet deep. Khaian Aksai is a camping ground close to a hot spring; grass and fuel are abundant.

12.—KHAIAN AKSAI TO TOLTI-JILGA.

*8 miles; from Sháhidúla 152 miles.*

Ascend the valley of the Ilisu River; jungle less dense, but still at times obstructive. Tolti-jilga is at the junction of two streams, of which the northern one leads to the Kurbu Pass. Grass and fuel obtainable.

13.—TOLTI-JILGA TO ILISU (across Kurbu Pass).

*11 miles; from Sháhidúla 163 miles.*

Ascend a narrow valley; scrub and jungle gradually lessen, and the road leads over pebbly bed of the stream, gradually ascending for  $8\frac{1}{2}$  miles to the Kurbu Pass, 14,700 feet high. The summit of the pass is rounded and smooth, and the ascent to it is quite easy. The descent for about half a mile is very steep, but it is practicable for laden ponies; the road then leads down the bed of a stream, which finally opens out on to the Tágh-dúm-básh Pámir. At Ilisu there are three or four Kirghiz yurts (felt tents) situated on an open undulating plain or pámir. Grass is plentiful, but no fuel, except dry dung, is obtainable. The Kirghiz keep large flocks of sheep and goats, also ponies and yaks. From here roads lead in all directions over the Tágh-dúm-básh Pámir, and there is no difficulty in moving in any direction.

## 14.—ILISU TO KÁRÁCHUKAR.

*16½ miles ; from Sháhidúla 179½ miles.*

The road leads over the pámir, an open plain partly of stone and partly covered with grass. At 2 miles a route leads off to the right over the Miriam Pass to the lower valley of the Yárkand River. At Káráchukar one stream leads down from the Khunjeráb Pass and another from the Mintaka and Wakhurjui Passes; these two unite at an old fort called Kurgán-i-Ujadbai, a few miles below the camping ground of Káráchukar. Grass and fuel abundant; small patches of land are also sometimes cultivated. From Káráchukar, Táshkurgán may be reached in two long marches; road easy, leading down the pámir.

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**Route 3.**

FROM THE TÁGH-DÚM-BÁSH PÁMIR (KÁRÁCHUKAR) TO THE VALLEY OF THE HUNZA RIVER BY THE MINTAKA PASS.

Route practicable for laden animals, but closed by snow from the middle or end of November till the end of April. Sheep and goats obtainable, but no other supplies; grass plentiful, fuel scarce.

## 1. KÁRÁCHUKAR TO MINTAKA AKSAI.

*15½ miles.*

Ascend the valley of the Káráchukar stream; at 6 miles a road leads off to the north over the Baiyik Pass to Aktásh on the Little Pámir. This route is practicable for ponies. At Mintaka Aksai fuel is scarce, grass plentiful. There is here a Kirghiz encampment of nine tents, with large flocks of sheep and goats. From here a route leads over the Wakhurjui Pass into Wakhán. It is practicable for ponies, and is occasionally used by the traders between Yárkand and Badakshán.

## 2. MINTAKA AKSAI TO FOOT OF MINTAKA PASS.

*9 miles ; from Káráchukar 24½ miles.*

Road leaves the valley of the Káráchukar stream, and ascends the valley of the Mintaka stream, easy and practicable for ponies ; the hill-sides are often covered with large patches of good grass, and are much frequented by the oves poli. The camping ground is about a mile and a half on the north side of the pass, at a spot where grass is plentiful, but fuel somewhat scarce.

## 3. CAMP NORTH FOOT OF MINTAKA PASS TO MURKÚSH.

*11 miles ; from Káráchukar 35 miles.*

Ascend bed of stream for one mile, then by zig-zag up mountain-side to the Mintaka Pass, 14,400 feet ; at the summit in the beginning of November there was deep snow, but in the summer the pass is said to be free of snow. The mountains alongside are very high and rugged, and some of the peaks are probably close on 23,000 feet in height. The descent is very steep and difficult, leading over a number of boulders on to a glacier on the southern side. It passes over this for a mile and a half, and then descends the pebbly bed of the Lop Jangal stream to Murkúsh. The Mintaka Pass, although the ascent and descent are steep and difficult, is practicable for ponies, and is the best route and the one most frequently used between Hunza and Yárkand. Immediately before reaching Murkúsh the road descends a steep and difficult zig-zag. At Murkúsh grass and fuel are plentiful, but there are no houses.

At this point the route joins that from Hunza by the Kilik Pass to Wákhan, traversed by Colonel Lockhart's Mission and described in the Gazetteer of the Eastern Hindu Kush Route, No. 41. Hunza is 70 miles distant from here, and Langar, the first village in Wakhán, 72 miles.

### Route 4.

FROM THE TÁGH-DÚM-BÁSH PÁMIR TO THE VALLEY OF THE HUNZA RIVER BY THE KHUNJERÁB PASS.

As far as the Khunjeráb Pass the road is easy, leading up the broad pámir. The pass is 14,300 feet high, and is quite easy on the northern side and is practicable for ponies; but on the southern side the country is said to be difficult, and the route is closed between the end of October and the middle of May. It is possible, however, to take ponies by it in the summer months. The route enters the valley of the Hunza River between Misgah and Gircha. From Káráchukar to the Khunjeráb Pass is two marches, and to Gircha three more. No supplies except sheep and goats are obtainable; grass is plentiful, fuel scarce.

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### Route 5.

FROM SHAKSGÁM TO THE SÁLTORO PASS.

Route impracticable for military purposes on account of glaciers.

SHAKSGÁM TO GUSHERBRUM-JILGA.

*15 miles.*

Ascend pebbly bed of Oprang River, from  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile broad. At 2 miles small patch of grass, a mile to the left, called Kulan-jilga.<sup>1</sup> At 7 miles fine patch of grass and jungle called Darbin Jangal; beyond this point no brushwood is obtainable;  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile beyond Darbin Jangal a stream, from 15 to 20 yards broad, with a depth of 1 foot, flowing over a pebbly bed about 400 yards wide, runs in on the right bank. I could get no information of there being any road up it. The Oprang River is crossed three times. In the middle of September it was 2 feet deep, and divided into many channels. Gusherbrum-jilga is a camping ground on the right bank of the Oprang River, on a stream flowing down from the Gusher-

<sup>1</sup> The names on this route were given by me as the localities had previously no names, the country being uninhabited.

brum peaks to the west. There are small quantities of low scrub about, which serve for grass and fuel.

#### GUSHERBRUM-JILGA TO GLACIER CAMP 1.

*8½ hours, 9 miles; from Shaksgám 24 miles.*

The first 4 miles good; then the Oprang River has to be crossed and recrossed several times. Being a glacier river, it varies in depth with the time of day. At 10 A.M. it was  $3\frac{1}{2}$  feet deep, with a strong current. Afterwards ascend moraine of the Urdok glacier; going fair for a couple of miles, then very bad. Scrub for fuel and grass is found at end of glacier. At the camping spot there is very scanty grass and no fuel.

After leaving Gusherbrum-jilga still keep up the broad, pebbly bed of the Oprang River. Two small streams are crossed—one issuing from a glacier, which, running down from the main Mústágh range to the west, reaches to within half a mile of the Oprang River.

At 4 miles reach the end of a second glacier. This glacier nearly touches the right bank of the Oprang River, but just leaves room for the stream to flow between it and the cliffs on the right bank. Consequently, the river has here to be crossed several times. It is generally divided into many channels, but where it was in one stream it was 27 yards broad,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  feet deep, with a rapid current. The breadth of the glacier at the end is 1,000 yards. After rounding end of glacier, cross a gravel plain lying between this glacier and the Urdok glacier, for  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile; then ascend the moraine on left bank of Urdok glacier; going for 9 miles then very bad.

#### CAMP 1 TO CAMP 2.

*8½ hours, 3½ miles; from Shaksgám 27½ miles.*

Still ascend the glacier; going very bad, the ponies not being able to keep their footing on the thin layer of gravel which covers the ice of the glacier. We were three times compelled to go back on account of crevasses. No grass or fuel.

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CAMP 2 TO CAMP 3.

*7½ hours, 5½ miles; from Shaksgám 33 miles.*

Still ascend glacier, up a medial moraine, near foot of Sáltoro Pass. No grass or fuel.

The Sáltoro Pass is so steep and difficult as to be impracticable for any except practised mountaineers.

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Route 6.

SHIMSHÁL-AKSAI TO CHONG JANGAL.

*2 marches, 27 miles.*

Practicable for laden animals. No supplies; grass scarce; fuel plentiful.

SHIMSHÁL-AKSAI TO SHOR-BULÁK.

*11 miles.*

Descend the valley of the Oprang River, crossing the stream nine times; depth  $3\frac{1}{2}$  to 4 feet, and very difficult to ford on account of the rapidity and strength of the stream. At 7 miles a patch of jungle on the left called Kuram-jilga, near the junction of a small stream. Shor-bulák is a spot situated near the junction of a stream, 15 yards broad and 1 foot deep, flowing down from the Oprang Pass leading on to the Tágh-dúm-básh Pámir. Up this stream road used formerly to exist, but it seems now to have fallen into disuse on account of landslips. At Shor-bulák grass and fuel are plentiful near a warm sulphur spring.

SHOR-BULÁK TO CHONG JANGAL.

*16 miles; from Sháhidúla 27 miles.*

Following down valley of the Oprang River to its junction with the Yárkand River, cross the streams eight times, depth 4 feet, and fords very difficult, as the stream can only be crossed where the current is rapid, for where the current is smooth the stream is too deep. Patches of high jungle and grass are met with a few miles above, and at Chong Jangal there is an extensive stretch of jungle 2 miles in length with

plenty of good grass. This spot is on the road between Sháhídúla and the Tágh-dúm-básh Pámir—see Route 2.

### Miscellaneous cross routes, from Native information.

#### a.—SHÁHIDÚLA TO KHOTÁN.

*13 marches ; impracticable for laden animals.*

1. Ali-Nazar-Kurgán.
2. Inishiro.
3. Tirik.
4. Gali-molak.
5. Kashus. Cross a very difficult pass—the Kashus-dawán; unladen ponies can be taken across with aid of ropes.
6. Kyan-alik Pass—not difficult.
7. Losu. Cross another Pass.
8. Aktásh Pass.
9. Yalguz-zerat Pass.
10. Toru-nê Pass. Arrive in Metiz River valley, which is well cultivated and inhabited by Khotán people.
13. Khotan. Follow down the valley of the Metiz River, The passes crossed on this route are over a succession of spurs running down to the Kárákásh River.

#### b.—SHÁHIDÚLA TO KHOTÁN (*viâ* THE HINDI-TÁSH PASS).

*13 marches ; practicable for animals.*

1. Gulbashen. Ascend the valley of the Kárákásh River.
2. Kyan Shiwar.
3. Pshnia. Cross the Hindi-tásh Pass (marked the Hindu-tágh on our maps) ;—except in one or two bad places it is practicable for laden ponies.
4. Shamsher-mazar-Khojan—on Kárákásh River.
5. Khatai-tam—on Kárákásh River.
6. Toman.
7. Chowar—on Toman river.
8. Sunak. Cross Buniya Pass; easy.

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9. Dowa.
  10. Zung-guya—in a plain.
  11. Piál-már.
  12. Zabar.
  13. Khotán.
- Road all good, except the Hindi-tásh Pass.
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For routes from Yárkand see Forsyth's Yárkand Mission Report, and Colonel Bell's Report on China, 1888, Vol. II.

For routes on the Pámir see Forsyth's Yárkand Mission Report.

For routes from Russian territory see Captain Belley's "From Osh to Chitral," compiled in the Intelligence Branch.

For routes in Hunza see Captain Barrow's Gazetteer of the Eastern Hindu Kush, and Colonel Lockhart's Report of the Gilgit Mission.

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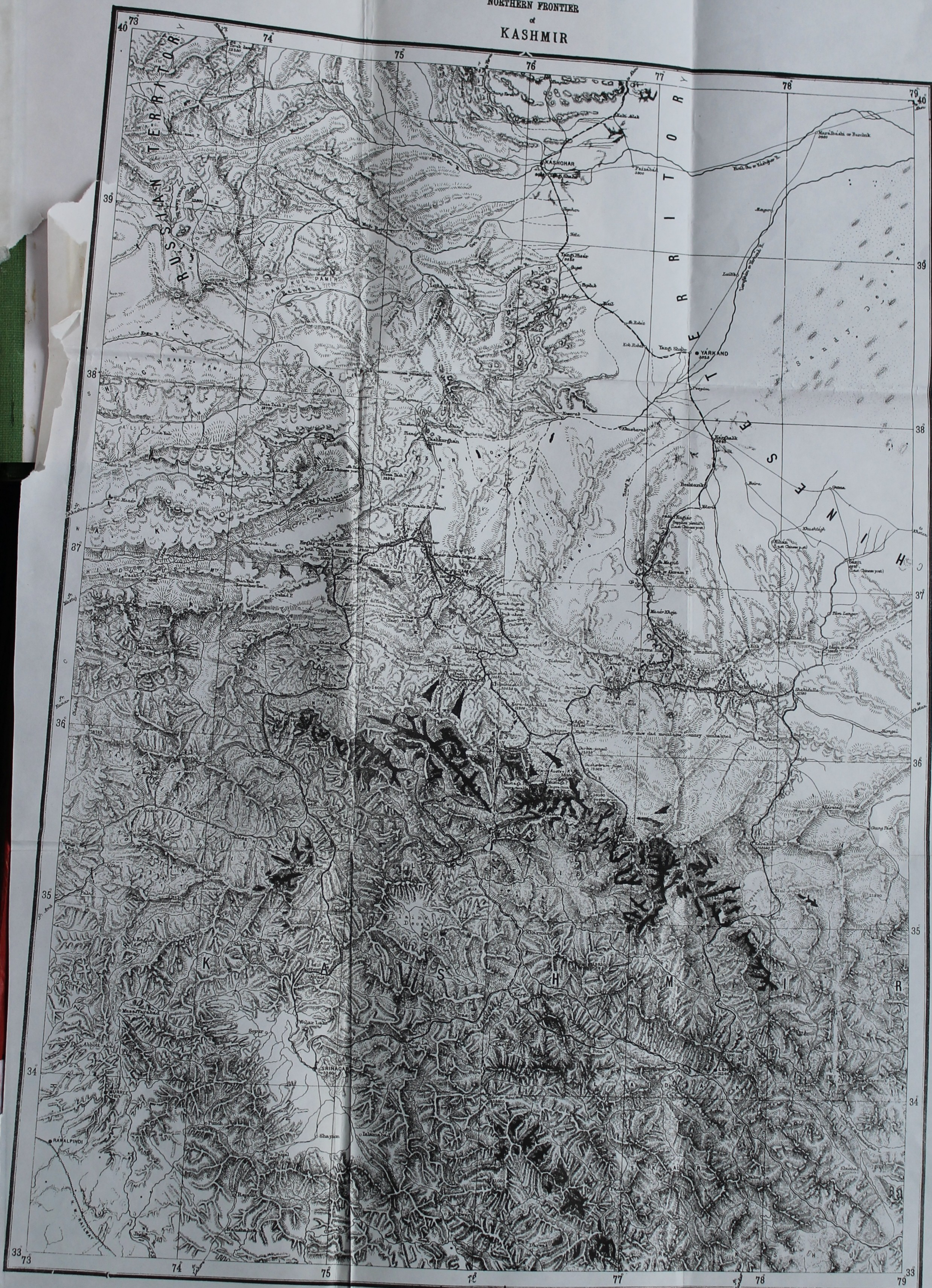
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MAP  
to illustrate the  
EXPLORATIONS OF  
CAPTAIN F. E. YOUNGHUSBAND, KING'S DRAGOON GUARDS  
on the  
NORTHERN FRONTIER  
of  
KASHMIR



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